

Acts Review

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[0 : 0 0] 1. We'll go back to the beginning to kind of wrap things up today. Acts chapter 1. So in thinking of how to wrap up a study of the book of Acts, I've been looking and praying about it and trying to figure out the direction to go in. I've been torn between like three or four different possible directions, and so I'm still not exactly sure which one we're going to go. So we'll see how this goes. But Acts chapter 1, we're given a lot of information in a short amount of time to kind of give us a heads up on what to expect as we went through the book of Acts. In verse 1, the former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. So Luke, who is the writer of Acts, has just given a very short summary of what he wrote to Theophilus the first time. And we know what he wrote to Theophilus the first time as the gospel according to Luke. And so he gave a quick summary of what he told Theophilus the first time about the things that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. And Acts, which is sometimes referred to as Luke volume 2, picks up right there, right at that same spot right where Jesus is about to ascend into heaven. And so someone has said Acts could be called what Jesus continues to do from the right hand of the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit in and through the church now that he's in heaven. And so it's just a continuation of the work of Christ, but it's done through the person of the Holy Spirit on earth through the church. And it's all about Jesus came. Remember the theme verse of Luke was

Jesus came, the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. And now how is he going to do that now that he's back in heaven? The gospel going out to the ends of the earth through the power of the Holy Spirit. So it's just a continuation. It's just a continuation of where Luke left off in volume 1. He picks up in volume 2, which we know as Acts. And Luke is one of those people that a lot of times he don't make a lot of knowledge about the fact of him being in certain places. He'll just say we were there and the pronouns will change from third person to first person. And he'll say they were doing this, they were doing this. Then all of a sudden he will say we without any notice. And now Luke is including himself in some of the travels and everything, but it comes to find out that he is one of Paul's most faithful friends and most faithful supporters. In fact, when you get to 2 Timothy and Paul is writing what's probably the last thing he ever wrote, 2 Timothy, he gets to chapter 4, he says, only Luke is with me. So Luke was faithful companion of Paul all the way up until the time of his death. Some commentators believe that when Paul is in prison for two years in Rome, there in the end of Acts, when we read in chapter 28 last week, that maybe Luke was allowed to be there with him as his personal physician. Luke would not be considered a prisoner. He would just be someone there that could come and go and attend to Paul as his physical needs demanded. And so Luke is the author of Acts. He was also the author of the gospel according to Luke. And so the first chapter of

Acts, we read about the ascension of Christ back to heaven. I remember this was very important. Jesus has told his disciples at one point, if I don't go back to heaven, I can't send the Holy Spirit. And so it was very important that Jesus ascended to heaven so that the Holy Spirit would come.

And remember the Holy Spirit did appear on the day of Pentecost in chapter 2. And that baptized all those believers into one body. When the Holy Spirit came, he baptized the believers into one body.

We call that the church. And so that was kind of the start of the New Testament church there in Acts chapter 2. And it's just not some random occurrence that it happened on Pentecost. It was divinely planned that way. If you think about what Pentecost meant and when Pentecost occurred, everything that God did through the Old Testament, He did for a purpose. Pentecost was one of the major feast days of the Jews. Before that, you had Passover, which was the 14th day of the first month of the year.

[4 : 45] That would correspond with somewhere our mid-March to mid-April, their first month of the year. And so the 14th day of that month was Passover. That's, remember, the celebration of being delivered out of Egypt when they put the blood on the doorpost and on the mantle. And they said, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And so that's where we get the name for that Passover.

And it's the celebration of their exodus out of Egypt being delivered by the blood of the Lamb. And so the day after Passover, the 15th day of the first month starts what's called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days, Jews can't eat anything with leaven in it. They have to purge their house completely of anything that contained leaven. Now, sometimes you may hear that whole time referred to as Passover because it's joined together. The Passover on the 14th, Unleavened Bread on the 15th, but you couldn't have unleavened bread. You couldn't have leavened bread on Passover either.

So sometimes they refer to that whole thing as the time of unleavened bread because they're together. Well, after you come to start of unleavened bread on the 15th day of the first month, the very next first day of the week, if you have a Sabbath between then and there, whenever the first day of the week rolls around, that was first fruits. That was the first fruits of the barley harvest.

Now that coincided right exactly when Jesus would resurrect from the dead. Passover when he was crucified, first fruits when he resurrected. 50 days later, after first fruits, 50 days later, Pentecost. Pentecost literally means 50th day. And so 50 days after first fruits, here's Pentecost.

Pentecost is the first fruits of the wheat harvest. There's different harvests throughout the seasons in Israel, and they marked their calendar by them. They were very important days. Pentecost was one of those special days that all the men had to appear in Jerusalem by law if you were a practicing Jew.

[6 : 48] So this would be a time where there'd be a lot of people, maybe close to a million people within the area of Jerusalem. And so this would be a very important time where a lot of people would be there. Pentecost, 50th day, first fruits of the wheat harvest, beginning of the summer harvest season.

And it's important. It's interesting that on Pentecost is one of those feast days where they had two loaves of bread they would make, and these could be leavened. These could have leaven in them.

Church made up of Jew and Gentile. We're sinners. We're corrupt. We got leaven running all through us. And so it's interesting how this all works together, and it's the beginning of the feast.

And if you look, if you go back, and I would encourage you to go back and study those Old Testament feasts. There's a lot in there that we miss sometimes, and every detail is important. For example, when they reaped the field, they didn't reap the corners. Remember, that was left for the sojourners and the strangers. So you have, when did the corners finally get reaped? At the very end.

What does Jesus say? At the end, I will send my angels together, my elect, from the four corners of the earth. Why? Because that's the four corners of the field that's not been reaped. Everything is significant in how they did the feast. Everything pointed to something that would eventually have its fulfillment. Passover is ultimately fulfilled in Christ's crucifixion. First fruits is ultimately fulfilled in his resurrection. Pentecost is ultimately fulfilled with the coming of the Holy Spirit and the church being formed and brought into one body. At the end of the summer harvest, you have the feast of trumpets when they say the, when it signals that harvest time is over.

[8 : 40] That's why that verse says the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Because that was the end of the summer harvest season. And it's interesting that the end of the summer harvest season would end with the feast of trumpets. And at the blowing of that last trumpet, that'll be a message to the Jews to afflict your souls. The day of atonement is coming when that priest would go into the most holy place. And if their sins were to be forgiven, the priest would come out.

If the priest wasn't alive, then God had not accepted their sacrifice and judgment would come. That's what made the resurrection of Christ so important. When he went in, he went into the most holy place. He offered himself as the sacrifice to the Father. He didn't have to offer, Hebrews said, a sacrifice for himself. He offered himself as the sacrifice. And the fact that he rose from the dead means God the Father said, I accept this sacrifice and payment has been made in full. When Jesus died on the cross, it is finished, to tell us die. That's the Greek word they would stamp on a document meaning paid in full. And so everything's been paid and it's been accepted by the Father. He resurrected, he's ascended to the Father. Now he sent the Holy Spirit and the church has been formed. So I encourage you to go back and study those feast days. They're very, very important. And if you study that, study the Feast of Trumpets as well, how that ends, the last trump, which can be on different days of the year depending on how the moons and all things fall. And there's certain days that no man knows the days of the hour. You start to put all that together and it's a very interesting study.

And so with Acts chapter 2, the church has been born. It's predominantly Jews. In fact, it's all 100% Jews at this time. And so here they are in Jerusalem. Remember chapter 1 verse 8. You're going to be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and all Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. That's the outline of the book. That's the outline we've kind of followed as we went through. So you have the church mostly in the area of Jerusalem and Judea chapters 1 through 7. In chapter 7, you have the stoning of Stephen. And then after he is put to death, you start to see things expand. You start to see the gospel spread. A lot of times persecution does that. Years ago, early part of church history, the saying was the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. In other words, the more they kill these people, the more it spreads. And that's kind of how things happened. As one person would be persecuted, people would be scattered. As they were scattered, they would take the gospel with them.

So and actually when you take the Jews thinking we're killing these people, we're getting them out of our hair, they were actually dispersing them and they were taking the gospel with them. And they were actually helping the mission of the church succeed by persecuting and spreading these people out.

They were taking the gospel with them. So that was actually helping. And so Stephen is put to death in chapter 7. And then from that in chapter 8, we find the gospel going into Samaria. Remember chapter 1 verse 8. Judea, Samaria. So the gospel goes to Samaria in chapter 8 through Philip. Remember he was one of those seven deacons that were appointed in chapter 6. So he was the first one to take the gospel to Samaria. And then the Ethiopian eunuch is saved. And so now we are looking at, if you think about, everything went back to three people at one time, right? Sham, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah.

[12 : 35] And so we have Jews, those are descendants of Sham. We have the Ethiopian eunuch who had been a descendant of Ham. And then come to Cornelius, we're going to get a descendant of Japheth. So all three sons of Noah has somebody in their lineage by the time we get to Cornelius that's been saved, that's had the gospel presented to them. So we get to the Ethiopian eunuch in chapter 8. In chapter 9, we have Saul's conversion. Remember Saul of Tarsus. He was the main persecutor of the church to the point where God said to Ananias, go lay hands on Saul. In modern day terms, Ananias said, Lord, are you sure about this?

Have you heard about him? And the Lord assured him that it's going to be okay. Go lay hands on him. He's a chosen vessel. He's going to take the gospel to different places. And so Ananias does that.

And so Paul is converted in chapter 9. And then he goes to Jerusalem. And then he returns to Tarsus. And then he kind of fades out of the picture for a little while. Because Peter has been the prominent apostle all throughout so far. We've had other ones to show up. We've had other people of prominence to kind of show up. Barnabas was important in chapters 4 and 5. And then we read of him a little bit later. And then you've had other ones like Stephen and Philip who were deacons who kind of show up. But as far as the apostles themselves, the 12, Peter has been the prominent voice that we've heard so far. Now that's going to start to taper off a little bit. Peter is still going to be prominent here in chapter 10 because he has the vision. And then he goes to see Cornelius. And the gospel has now went to the Gentiles. It's interesting to think that we think of Paul as the missionary to the Gentiles. And he was. But Peter was actually the first one to take the gospel to a Gentile named Cornelius. And so Cornelius was saved. And then at the end of chapter 10, if you're ever talking with someone who wants to say that baptism is a requirement to receive the

Holy Spirit, the end of Acts chapter 10 is a place you need to take them. Because in verse 44, while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished. And as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? What's the defining characteristic of a saved person? They have received the Holy Ghost. These people hadn't been baptized yet, but they had received the Holy Ghost. So baptism is not a requirement. You receive the Holy Ghost first, then you can be a baptized believer. All right. But if you don't get baptized, that's not what doesn't save you. Not having faith is what doesn't save you. Faith in Christ saves you. You receive the Holy Spirit, you're saved. Now you go get baptized. All right. So that's what happened. That's what happened here. And so in chapter 11, Peter has to give a defense to the Jews. You know, you've been hanging out with the Gentiles. You've been staying in their home. You've been eating with them. What is wrong with you? Basically is what they said. And so Peter relays all that what happened with

[16 : 09] Cornelius and how that he was saved and how that he became a believer. And so you come to chapter 12 and you have Peter's arrest and release. And also when you get to chapter 11, you have the church in Antioch. So things are starting to change focus as far as location. Everything before now has been centered around the first church that was formed in Jerusalem. But now we have a sister church has been formed in Antioch. Antioch of Syria, just straight north from Jerusalem. And so here's another church body that has been formed. And that's going to be the sending church of Paul. Paul's going to be sent out of that church. So chapter 12, you have Peter arrested and released. Remember, that's where they had the prayer meeting. And they were praying for Peter's release. He shows up at the door. The woman goes and answers the door and goes back and says, hey, Peter's at the door. They're like, no, we're praying for him to be released from prison. A lot of faith happening at that prayer meeting, right?

So they are praying for him to be released from prison. He's standing at the door. And she basically closes the door on him and goes and tells the other people. And finally they go say, hey, Peter is really here. And so he's been released from prison. And now in chapter 13, Paul is going to start his first missionary journey. So the gospel is going to start to go out. Remember our outline, Jerusalem, Judea, one through seven. Samaria, chapter eight, uttermost parts of the earth.

That's going to start in force in chapter nine. But you think about if you go back, it's kind of behind the scenes, but it's actually been happening already. Think about all those converts that were saved on the day of Pentecost. Remember a lot of those were not residents of Jerusalem. A lot of those had probably come in because of the feast. Now you take 3,000 that had been saved. And a few days later, 5,000 were saved. So you got 8,000 people, a lot of which may not live in Jerusalem.

Now they went back to their homes, taking the gospel with them. So the gospel has been spreading behind the scenes even before Paul goes there. But Paul is going to be the first record of it where we're actually given some of the history of it in the book of Acts. And so remember Paul's first missionary journey stayed around the area of Asia. He was dealing mostly with Jewish people still in the area of what we know as Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. And so that's where a lot of the, that he would have encountered the Galatians. He would have spent a lot of time with those people.

And so that's where he spent most of his, his first missionary journey. He spends a lot of times with Jews. He goes into the synagogues, preaches to the Jews first. After he gets run out, usually he'll go to the Gentiles. And now a lot of Gentiles are being converted. So now he comes off of his first missionary journey and we come to chapter 15 and they have the Jerusalem council where members of the church of Antioch along with Paul are going to Jerusalem to kind of say, here's what's been happening with the Gentiles. They're getting saved. Now, what do we do with them? Because you had a group that said, well, they got to be circumcised. They got to put themselves under the law of Moses.

[19:30] And some were saying, no, we shouldn't make them do that. And finally, one person says, how are we going to put a yoke on them that we can't even bear ourselves? And so just tell them to abstain from fornication and not eat anything that's offered to idols. And so they were saying, you don't have to be put under the law now that you've been saved. Just do these things. And those things that they mentioned would have been offensive to Jewish people in general. And so that goes back to the whole James discussion of eating things that would offend the weaker brother, the stronger brother, things that offend. Read more about that in James's epistle. And so they have this Jerusalem council. And basically they realized, hey, Jews, Gentiles, they can both be saved. They can both be part of this, this one body, the church. And so when you get to the end of chapter 15, Paul is ready to go on his second missionary journey. This time, because of dissension between him and Barnabas, they're going to split and go separate ways. Barnabas is going to take John Mark and Paul is going to take Silas. And then you come to a momentous occasion in chapter 16, where the gospel makes landfall in Europe for the first time. Paul reaches Macedonia and then goes to Philippi. And so this is the first occurrence of Paul taking the gospel into the European continent. And so he has success at

Philippi. He gets arrested. Him and Silas are thrown in jail, the conversion of the Philippian jailer. And then Paul will continue this journey all the way through chapter 18. And then when he, at the end of chapter 18, he's been in Corinth. He is now going to go back to Antioch. And after he makes a trip through Ephesus. And then there's very short period of time between the second and the third missionary journey to the point where the Bible don't really say that it happened. It's that close together. But he does return to Antioch. And then later we find him headed to Ephesus. So it's a very short period of time. Not much happens in between. His third missionary journey is mostly Ephesus. He's going to spend about three years in Ephesus. And he's going to develop a really good, strong relationship with the people. And so there's where he's going to spend the majority of his third missionary journey.

And so by this time in the life of Paul, he's written several of his epistles. He's written Galatians. That would have happened about the time of the Jerusalem council, maybe before or after, back in chapter 15. He would have written Galatians sometime around that time. That's believed to be the first thing he wrote. Then shortly thereafter, he would have written first and second Thessalonians after his visit to them. And then shortly after that, he would have written first and second Corinthians. Remember that church was a mess. And so he was writing to them. And church history tells us he wrote more than two letters to them. But for some reason, the Lord only saw fit to put two of them in the scriptures. So he's written to the first, the Corinthians twice. And also by now he would have written his letter to the Romans. And so this would have all happened by the time you get to his, the end of his third missionary journey. And so after he returns, after he's leaving Ephesus, he meets with the Ephesian elders in chapter 20. And you start to notice the transition.

The apostles are starting to fade off the scene and care of the churches are now being left to the elders. It's happened in Jerusalem. It's happening in Antioch. Now it's happening in Ephesus. Paul is leaving. Now he's leaving the church in the hands of the, in the care of the elders there at, at Ephesus. And he tells them, this will be the last time you see me. And so he is going to leave there for the last time. And he's going to begin his, his journey to Jerusalem. And he's been warned.

He's been told, you go to Jerusalem, you're going to get arrested. You're going to get imprisoned. And that's, that's what happens. He gets captured in the temple in chapter 21. And then chapters 22, all the way, basically through the end of the book is little by little getting Paul to, to Rome. That's eventually where he's going to go. He's going to go to Rome and the book will end with Paul in prison in Rome. And in chapter 28, we are told that he's going to be there for two years. Remember he's been in custody for two years already because Felix and Festus, or Felix didn't want to release him. So he was held for two years. Festus took over and brought him before Agrippa. He appealed to Caesar and now he's being sent to Rome. So this will be four years Paul has been in custody. And so as he's in prison for these two years, there in Rome, he's going to do more writing. He's going to write his epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and

[24 : 40] Philemon. He's going to write all of those during his first time in prison. Now what's interesting about that list, Colossians is one of his epistles and that's the, that's one church he wrote to that he never visited. He never visited the Colossian church as far as we know, but he wrote to them.

They were having some, some different issues going on. They had some asceticism going on where you do all these things. It makes you more holy. If you don't eat this, you don't touch this, you don't do this kind of thing. Makes you, he was, he was dealing with some asceticism, legalism type stuff, and also some Gnosticism in that church. And so he wrote to the Colossians during this time. According to church history, after those two years, Paul is released for a while. In that time, shortly after his release, he would write 1 Timothy and Titus. And then shortly thereafter, he would be imprisoned again, and he would write his letter to 2 Timothy. And so think of all the things that Paul, Paul suffered. And if you read 2 Corinthians, I think it's chapter 8, he enumerates a lot of the things he had already suffered. And you come down to 2 Timothy chapter 4, and Paul is kind of closing out. So you think about all that Paul experienced just in the book of Acts that we read about. And so this is sometime later, some years after Acts has concluded.

And Paul is writing, I charge thee therefore, 2 Timothy 4, 1, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou when all things endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Paul is writing kind of like his last words to his son in the faith, Timothy, who just happens to be in Ephesus, where Paul spent all that time in his last missionary journey. Timothy was an elder in the church at Ephesus. And so Paul is writing back to Timothy, his son in the faith, who is a minister, an elder there in Ephesus. And now you've seen Paul is going to kind of turn and he's kind of passing the reins on to him. He's like, you're to do these things now. And he says, for I am now ready to be offered in the time of my departures at hand.

I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. And so think about here's this, here's this Pharisee that was persecuting the church, putting Christians to death.

And he comes down to the end of his life. He's been converted. He's been changed. He's been made a missionary. He's been sent out to the Gentiles. He's traveled to different places of the world, taking the gospel for probably the first time that's gotten to these places. First missionary to go to Europe. And then all the things the Lord used him to accomplish, but all the sufferings that he experienced, all the things that he stoned and left for dead. And he's a few miles down the road preaching in another city the next day. I think about beaten with rods, beaten, stone, beaten, all the things that he suffered, the different shipwrecks, the different night and day in the deep, and all those things that he has experienced. But the Lord brought him through it all. Where he could say, I've finished my course. I've kept the faith. Henceforth, there's laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. So the book of Acts introduces us to one of the most important people in church history, the apostle Paul. Think about if there were no book of Acts.

[28 : 37] Think about if, if you closed out John and went right to Romans, there'd be a big gap in our knowledge. Who's Paul? Where'd he come from? You know, that would be our, you know, we haven't heard about this guy. He was probably alive at the time of Jesus, but they don't think they ever met personally. But, you know, we don't know of anything about Paul before the, before the book of Acts, but now we've got 13 books we're going to read that he wrote. So Acts is kind of that bridge. And now, well, here's all these Jews, where all these Gentiles come from? Why are we writing to all Gentiles? Why are so many Gentiles being talked about? I mean, you get to predominantly Jewish books later with like Hebrews, first and second Peter and James, but what are all these Gentile epistles? Where'd they come from? Acts answers those questions. So that's, that's the story of Acts. Acts is a transitional period.

We see things in Acts that will never be repeated. There will never be another day of Pentecost like Acts chapter two. It's been fulfilled. It's no longer necessary. Is Pentecost still a day on the calendar? Yes. Do some Jews still celebrate that feast in the way the Jews would have years ago? Yes.

But as far as the actual fulfillment of what it meant was meant to represent, it'll never happen like that again. Some things that happened, the things that the apostles could do were a transitional period. They could do them to validate their apostleship. Now the apostles are gone. Those are no longer needed. It's no longer needed for somebody to walk up to somebody and put your hand on their head and say, be healed. And they get up and walk. That's no longer necessary. We're not apostles like the 12 were, because remember they had to be with Jesus from the time of his resurrection to time he was taken up. And they had to be, they had to see him after his resurrection. And then they had to be with him from the beginning to the end of his ministry. That's why Paul called himself an apostle out of due season. He was commissioned by the Lord himself. He saw the resurrected Christ.

He just wasn't around to follow with the rest of them. But he was still an apostle, apostolos, the Greek word, one sent, an envoy, someone sent on a mission. And so Paul qualified. He had a special commission. He was a chosen vessel. So that's, that's the book of Acts. I hope it's been a blessing to you. I hope you'll go back and study it more. We've just, to say we scratched the surface, I think will be an overstatement. We've, we've not even done that. There's so much in, if you shop for commentaries, if you look at different commentaries, you'll find out there's people that's written commentaries on the book of Acts that are about that thick. And there's, there's a guy that's written a four volume set that's got over 3,000 pages just on Acts. It's, don't get that.

It's like you make a house payment for that kind of money. But that there, those exist. You've got people that have written little books on Acts and you've got people that have written thousands and thousands of pages. Something that would take up the same space as like a piece of furniture.

[31 : 49] They've written it just on, on the book of Acts. And so there's a lot of good resources out there, a lot of good materials that are out there. You can find some stuff on the internet that you don't have to pay for. Those are the kind I like. Ironside's commentaries, H.A. Ironside, wonderful commentary writer from years ago. His commentaries you can read for free on the internet. A former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary named Dr. Thomas Constable, he has produced notes on most of the Bible. They're available for free online. And then there's other places you can go. Warren Wiersbe has a two-volume set on Acts. Very inexpensive, very affordable, very good reading.

Anything you can get your hands on by Warren Wiersbe is probably going to be good. So I highly recommend him. J. Vernon McGee, Through the Bible. Always, always good. You can buy the whole set or you can buy individual little volumes. I've read a lot from him while going through this. Wonderful.

There's James Montgomery Boyce. He was a former pastor of 10th Presbyterian in Philadelphia. A Presbyterian. He's going to see things differently on some things, but there's a lot of places he has a lot of good information to offer. So his commentaries are usually fairly inexpensive. And basically they were sermons that he preached as pastor. And he went through and edited and put them in like a commentary form. So they're very good as well. And then there's all kinds of good resources out there. But I encourage you to study. Spend time in the text. We've just scratched the surface a little bit. But I hope this has been a blessing. This will be my last day. As Sunday school teacher, I will be officially stepping down. I thank you for all the encouragement. Thank you for all the words of encouragement.