



THE STORY *continues...*

Join us each week as God weaves His Story into the fabric of our daily lives.

Chapter 28 New Beginnings

Listen to *The Story*

Read **Chapter 28** of *The Story*

There are several descriptions of what the early Church looked like, how it operated, and the primary qualities of the people within it.

Search through chapter 28 and discover a few of those qualities that marked the early Church and its behavior both among believers and between believers and non-believers.

Learn *The Story*

Look for ways in which God's story and your story connect this week.

Having drafted a list of primary qualities that marked the early Church's behavior both internally and externally, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I (does my family) embody the Spirit-driven qualities of the early Church? Why? Why not?
- What will I do to ensure that my family is engaged in the vibrant life of the Church, if not already doing so?

Love *The Story*

Intentionally take a step forward in faith.

Notice that "worship" is not mentioned as one of the things the early Church gathered for. This is not because they did not worship together. This is because their "worship" consisted of much of what the Jewish Christians had always done: reading the Hebrew Scriptures and breaking bread.

As much as we'd like to believe that gathering for worship on Sunday mornings includes the entirety of Christian-expression and meets every one of the needs we have as God's children, it does not. The early Church embodied the reality that Jesus spent most of His time out in the community, meeting people, preaching the Gospel, and giving Himself to many different needs and causes.

How will you (and your family) take a step closer to being *out in the community* as a real expression of your Christian faith?

Luther's Explanation

Saul was a persecutor of Christians. He was intoxicated with hate, and hate fueled his actions. He literally breathed threats and murder against Jesus' disciples. Who would have ever imagined that he would become Paul, the most devoted servant of Christ?

We are reminded that we are not the judge. Usually it's the most unlikely people who God calls to serve. Martin Luther said "When the Word of God strikes the heart, it is like a thunderbolt which overthrows even the most strongly fortified place by its force. Saul hated the gospel with such an obstinate heart that he was like an immovable rock. Yet he is shattered by the hammer of the Word. *For God kills and he brings to life. He brings down to Sheol and he raises up.*

(1 Sam 2:6) (Luther's Works 3:348)



PROMISE

This week, cling to God's promise for you:

"My Spirit dwells within you. You have been changed and are ready to do My work."

The EXTRA Mile



The early Christian Church faced many obstacles.

Watch the PBS video:

Peter and Paul: A Christian Revolution

<http://video.pbs.org/video/1352482060>