

HEROES

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT

August 24, 2026 – After the Apostles

THE GOSPEL CONTINUES

— GOD WORKING THROUGH FAITHFUL WITNESSES —



JESUS



PAUL

Apostle to the Gentiles



TIMOTHY



Strengthened churches



Elders at Ephesus



Church leaders



Faithful men
(2 Timothy 2:2)

Entrust to faithful men
who will teach others also.

— 2 TIMOTHY 2:2 —



TITUS



Elders in Crete



Established &
organized churches



LUKE



Traveled with Paul
("we" passages in Acts)



Gospel of Luke
Good News for All



Acts
The Story Continues

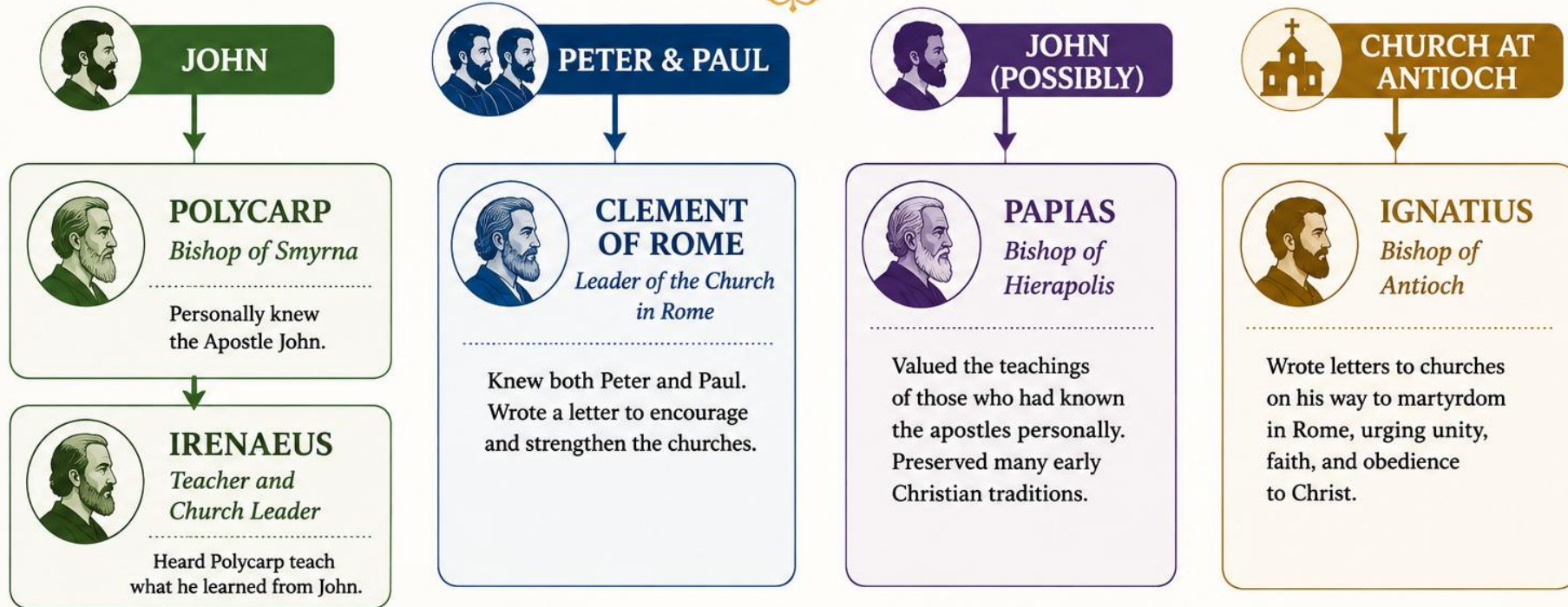


Recorded the story of
the Gospel for all generations

"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2

THE NEXT GENERATION

FAITHFUL LEADERS WHO CARRIED ON THE GOSPEL



WHAT WE KNOW



Strong historical evidence
John taught Polycarp,
and Polycarp taught
Irenaeus.



Early Christian tradition
says Clement knew
Peter and Paul and
led the church in Rome.



Papias says he learned
from those who had
actually known the
apostles.



Ignatius was a leader
in the church that the
apostles helped
establish in Antioch.



These faithful leaders kept the Gospel alive, taught sound doctrine, and strengthened the Church in the years immediately following the apostles.

THE FIRST GENERATION AFTER THE APOSTLES

Faithful leaders who taught, wrote, and strengthened the Church
(c. AD 60–160)



CLEMENT OF ROME
c. AD 35–99



- 📍 Rome, Italy
- 🏛️ Supported the Church in Rome and wrote to the church in Corinth.
- 📖 Wrote *1 Clement*, a letter urging unity, humility, and faithful leadership.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH
c. AD 35–107/115



- 📍 Antioch, Syria
- 🏛️ Bishop of Antioch and a strong defender of unity and sound teaching.
- 📖 Wrote 7 letters on his journey to martyrdom (e.g., to the Romans, Ephesians, Smyrnaeans).

PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS
c. AD 60–130



- 📍 Hierapolis, Asia Minor
- 🏛️ A teacher who preserved the teachings of the apostles and those who knew them.
- 📖 Wrote *Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord* (5 books), from information he received from "the elders."

POLYCARP OF SMYRNA
c. AD 69–155



- 📍 Smyrna, Asia Minor
- 🏛️ Bishop of Smyrna and a disciple of the apostles (especially connected to John).
- 📖 Wrote a letter to the Philippians.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS
c. AD 130–c. 202



- 📍 Lyons (Lugdunum), Gaul
- 🏛️ Taught widely in Gaul (France) and defended the true faith.
- 📖 Wrote *Against Heresies* (5 books), a major work preserving apostolic truth.

BARNABAS
c. AD 5–c. 75



- 📍 Cyprus
- 🏛️ Encouraged the believers in Cyprus and Antioch.
- 📖 No writings survive, but he is remembered as a great encourager of the early Church.

THE CHAIN CONTINUES

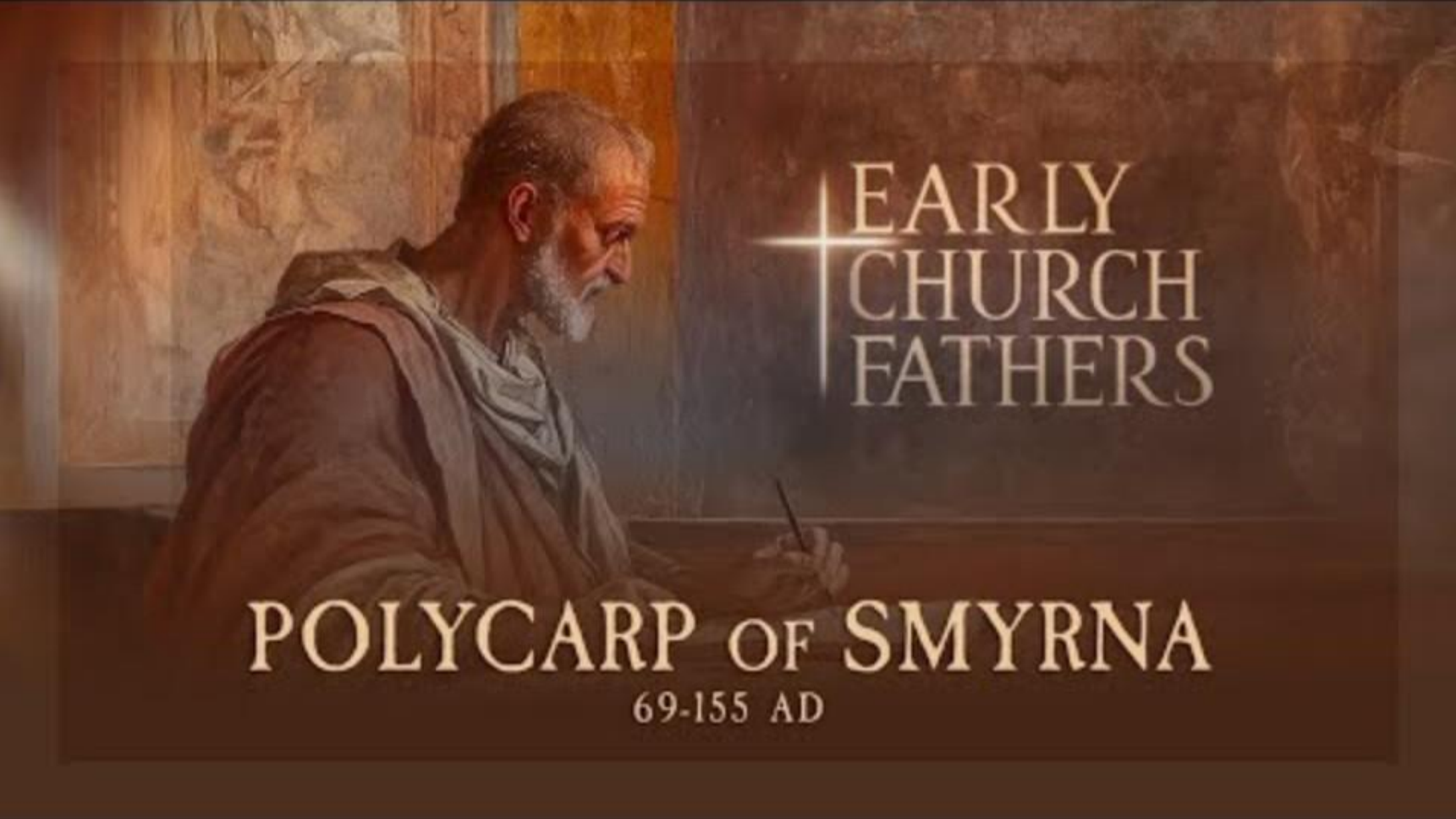
Apostles → Early Disciples (Timothy, Luke, Titus, etc.) → First Generation After the Apostles (Polycarp, Clement, Ignatius, Papias, Barnabas, Irenæus) → The Gospel Spreads Through Every Generation



These faithful men kept the Gospel alive, taught sound doctrine, encouraged the churches, and passed the faith to the next generation.

The mission that began with the apostles continued through faithful followers of Jesus.

- 📍 Location
- 🏛️ Church / Ministry
- 📖 Writings / Legacy
- ★ Key City



EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

POLYCARP OF SMYRNA

69-155 AD

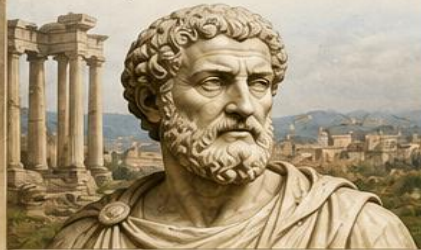
EVIDENCE BEYOND THE BIBLE

NON-CHRISTIAN WRITERS WHO MENTIONED CHRISTIANS, JESUS, AND EARLY CHRISTIAN EVENTS

These accounts come from non-Christians writing in their own time.
They confirm that the people and events of the New Testament really existed.

JOSEPHUS

c. AD 37 – c. 100
Jewish historian



📖 Wrote: *Jewish Antiquities*
(c. AD 93–94)
📍 From: Jerusalem

“About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man... He was the Christ.” And when Pilate, at the suggestion of leading men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not cease...”
– *Jewish Antiquities* 18.3.3

TACITUS

c. AD 36 – c. 120
Roman historian



📖 Wrote: *Annals* (c. AD 115)
📍 From: Rome

“Christus, from whom the name [Christian] originated, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate...”
– *Annals* 15.44

PLINY THE YOUNGER

c. AD 61 – c. 113
Roman governor



📖 Wrote: *Letters* (c. AD 112)
📍 From: Bithynia (Asia Minor)

“They affirmed that the whole of their guilt or error was this, that they were in the habit of meeting before it was light, on a stated day, and singing alternately a hymn to Christ as to a god...”
– *Letter to Emperor Trajan* (10.96)

SUETONIUS

c. AD 69 – after 122
Roman historian



📖 Wrote: *Lives of the Caesars*
(c. AD 121)
📍 From: Rome

“Claudius expelled from Rome the Jews who were continually rioting at the instigation of Chrestus.”
– *Life of Claudius* 25.4

LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

c. AD 120 – c. 180
Greek writer & satirist



📖 Wrote: *The Death of Peregrinus* (c. 165)
📍 From: Samosata (Syria)

“The Christians... worship a man to this day – the distinguished person who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced their new rites into the world...”
– *The Death of Peregrinus* 11



These writers were not Christians. Many even opposed Christianity.
Yet they still recorded what they saw, heard, and experienced.

History is not only written by believers. The truth stands even in the writings of those who did not believe.



CHURCH LEADERS

The Holy Spirit Helped the Church Choose Leaders

The early church needed:

- elders
- teachers
- shepherds
- evangelists
- servants

The Holy Spirit's Work



DEFENDING THE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit Helped the Church Defend the Truth

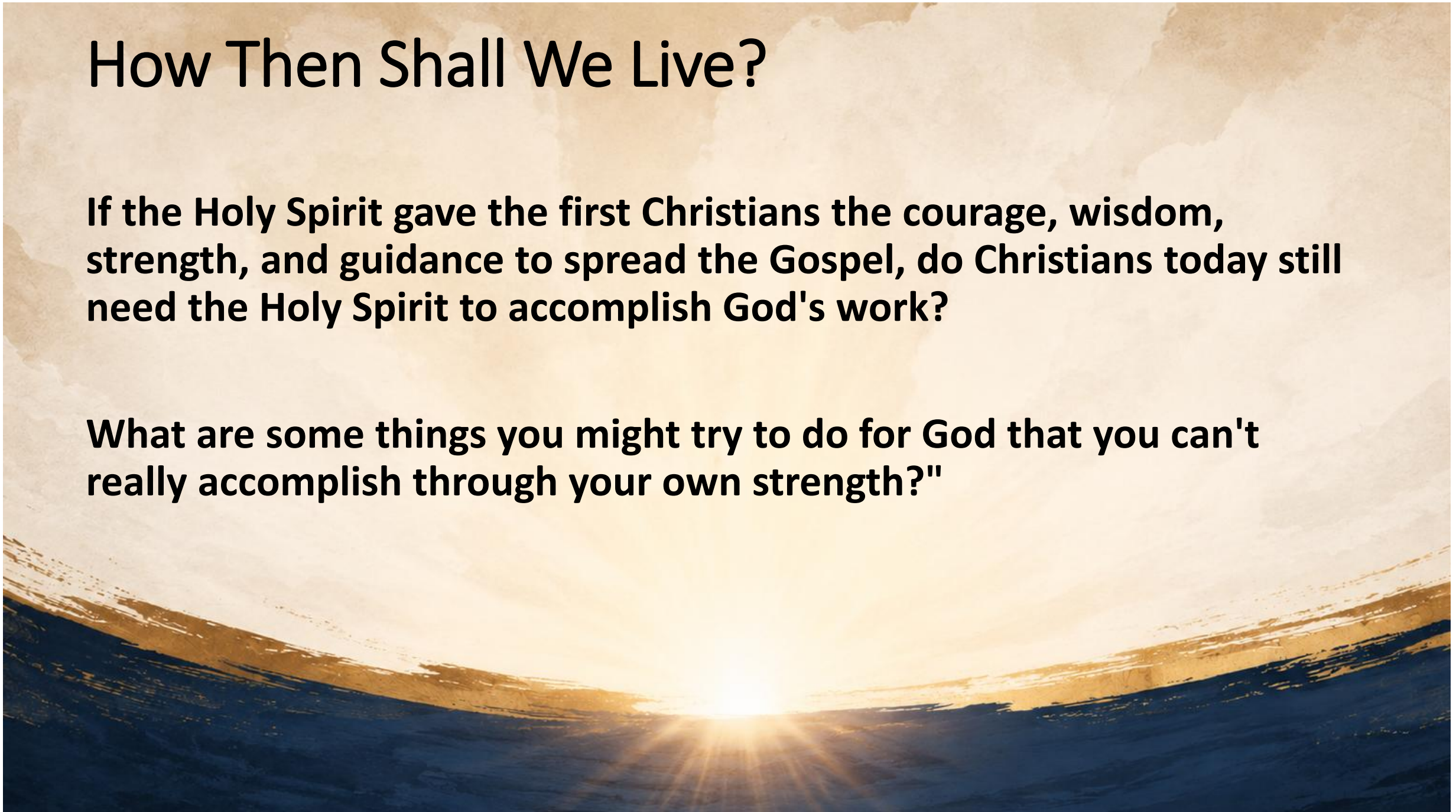
Early Christians encountered:

- false teachers / religions
- persecution
- philosophical arguments
- disagreements in churches

How Then Shall We Live?

If the Holy Spirit gave the first Christians the courage, wisdom, strength, and guidance to spread the Gospel, do Christians today still need the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's work?

What are some things you might try to do for God that you can't really accomplish through your own strength?"



The Enduring Message:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

Jesus gave the mission → the **Holy Spirit** empowered the mission → the **Apostles** began the mission → **Disciples** carried it forward → **Churches** multiplied → **New Generations** received it and spread the good news.

And the Gospel continued to "the ends of the earth."

