

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week December 1, 2013

This Week's Focus: The Church, with great courage, continues to grow as it faces persecution that included physical affliction.

This Week's Text: Acts 5:17-42

"Through the repeated hammer blows of defeat, destruction, and deportation, interpreted by the faithful prophets, Israel has to learn that election is not for comfort and security but for suffering and humiliation." **Leslie**

Newbigin

"We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed." **Tertullian**

"When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." **Acts 14:21-22**

Related Texts: Daniel 1:8, 1 Peter 2:18-19, Romans 13:1-7, Philippians 2:5-12, Hebrews 12:2

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- How has God spoken to you regarding the sermon and/or text?
- Verse 17 says that the religious leaders were jealous. How does jealousy affect people and influence their attitudes and actions? What are some ways we can combat jealousy in our lives?
- Why were the Apostles arrested? What were they told to do when the angel freed them?
- What do the actions of the Apostles say about them? How would you define the word courage?
- What do you think helps people prepare for persecution? Have you ever been persecuted for your faith? What helped you prepare for it?
- Why do you think God delivered the Apostles from jail only to allow them to be arrested again? What was God saying?
- Picture this scene from the perspective of the chief priests and the rest of the council. What were the people thinking and feeling?

- The Apostles told the authorities that they would not obey their instruction but rather obey God.
 - What is the basis for their disobedience?
 - Discuss the actions they took and did not take.
- Consider the teaching of scripture on obeying the government. Reference 1 Peter 2:18-19, Romans 13:1-7 and our text.
 - When is civil disobedience the right action for the Christian?
 - Discuss some thoughts concerning what actions would be “right” and what actions would be “wrong”?
- Verses 30-31 contain the foundational truths of the gospel. What are they? Where else in scripture do we see these truths?
- What is Gamaliel's point and advice? How do you view his words and actions?
- In Verse 31 Jesus is called “Leader and Savior”. What do those terms mean? Consider that the term “leader” was used of ancient heroes like Hercules. What do you think the Apostles were trying to communicate by using that term?
- What are some characteristics of heroes and superhero's? How are they similar and different than Jesus? Reference Philippians 2:5-12.
- What do you make of the apostles “rejoicing that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name”? What is behind this perspective? What were they looking to? Reference verses 32 and 41.
- Read Hebrews 12:2. Discuss what Jesus was looking to as He faced suffering. What can we say about Jesus, the ultimate hero and true man of courage?
- Are we prepared to suffer for the name of Jesus?

Gospel Celebration:

- Jesus is the ultimate hero who died in our place.
- Jesus is the ultimate hero who gave up His power for our salvation.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for opportunities to witness with boldness to others concerning the person and work of Jesus.
- Pray for strength to suffer well.

Next Week's Text: Revelation 2.