

ACTS Launch – “Peter and John Before the Council” (Acts 4:1-31)

For the week of November 1, 2015

Testimony

Have a volunteer share their testimony (5-10 minutes).

Tell the Story

Summarize or tell the story of Acts 4:1-31. Then read the passage. Discuss any missing details from the telling of the story. Finally, rebuild the story as a group.

Verse 12 remains as stupendous and powerful today as it was first spoken by Peter 2,000 years ago. How would you explain this verse to a nonbeliever or to those who believe there are many ways to God?

Let's summarize the main insights of this passage. Look at the verses for each insight. Do you agree or disagree with each insight? Write your thoughts down and then discuss in your group.

Insight #1 – Persecution is expected if we are doing our jobs (vv. 1-3). Can you be a strong active believer in Christ and not face persecution?

Insight #2 – Conversions and growth are expected if we are doing our jobs (v. 4). The early church was both suffering sharp persecution and enjoying enormous growth and support. Is this still true with today's church? Why or why not?

Insight #3 – Civil disobedience may be necessary if we are doing our jobs (v. 19). This is not common but Peter clearly says if Christians are commanded to do something that God has forbidden, or forbidden to do something that God has commanded, we are to obey God and not civil authorities. Agree or disagree?

Insight #4 – Experience and knowledge of Christ is a dynamic for our witness (v. 20). We should not be witnessing out of duty and drudgery, but because of what we have seen and heard. What have you seen and heard?

Insight #5 – Christian leaders must be extremely well trained in the Word, and must be extremely strong and godly in character (vv. 8-12), but they do not necessarily have to have what the world considers strong credentials and pedigrees (vv. 13-14). We should choose our leaders by recognizing God's anointing of them, not the human establishment's attitude toward them. Agree or disagree?

Insight #6 – We should spend far more time in adoration and awe and worship of God. It is through worship that the disciples received the main thing they need – joyful confidence (vv. 23-31). They did not pray for protection, but for the reality of God's power. So we learn the following: we do not so much need a change in our circumstance as we do a change in our hearts. Is this evident in your life today? Share in your group.

Prayer

“O God, please fill us with your Spirit again and again. Help us to be disciplined in spending time in your Word, time with your people, time in prayer. May the world not be able to miss the fact that we have been with Jesus. Please help us to be humble and dependent upon the Holy Spirit, for your glory and honor. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Bottom Line: The transformed life is not about you, but about Jesus in you!