

ACTS: Launch – “Godly Disobedience” (Acts 5:12-42)

For the week of November 15, 2015

Testimony

Have a volunteer share their testimony (5-10) minutes. How can your testimony be used to start a conversation or respond to someone desiring to know about God and Jesus? Discuss in your group.

Tell the Story

Summarize or tell the story of Acts 5:12-42. Then read the passage. Discuss any missing details from the telling of the story. Finally, rebuild the story as a group.

1. Compare Romans 13:1-7 to Acts 5:12-42. Share what you learn from the comparison. Have you ever been in a situation in which you had to choose between obeying God and obeying the authorities God has placed in your life? Consider governmental, parental and church authorities in your answer.

2. How did the disciples respond to the beatings they received for preaching the gospel in Jerusalem? How do you typically respond when your faith is challenged or you are mistreated for what you believe about God?

How do we engage our culture?

1. First, understand that people are watching us (5:12-13). There were many in Jerusalem who were not joining the church, but they weren't ignoring them either. In fact, they saw good things that were happening through them.
 - a. Are you aware that people are watching you as a Christian?
 - b. How can your everyday actions impact or influence someone?
2. Second, people will join us (5:14-16). Though some were content to watch from a distance, others were ready to dive in.
 - a. God continues to bring new people to RiverLakes every week. How can you welcome and show the love of Christ to those God is bringing us?

- b. Why is a transformed life for Christ so attractive to others? What does a transformed life look like? Does your description describe your life?
3. Third, people will persecute us (5:17-18). The success of the church in Jerusalem elicited a reaction from the religious establishment: jealousy!
- a. Should we be surprised or threatened that we may witness persecution in the USA? Can the church thrive in an environment of intimidation and/or persecution? How?
4. Finally, engage the culture with the gospel (5:27-40). The gospel is an offensive message and a glorious message. It offends because the gospel must include bad news (our sin) in order for it to be good news.
- b. If the gospel is a glorious message (and it is!), then why aren't we more bold in sharing it? Do we care more about what people think than what God thinks?

Pray

- Pray for our brothers and sisters around the world for whom this is a daily reality. We also pray that as things escalate in our country, that we are motivated by the Gospel to rejoice even in the face of persecution because Jesus is worth it.
- May we be a people who could say like the Thessalonians, *"But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict."*
1 Thessalonians 2:2

Final Thought

When you get the sense of what Jesus endured in order to obey God rather than man, it will fill you with courage and passion to endure the little persecutions here knowing that the ultimate suffering was taken by Him and you never have to experience that. God has equipped His church with the capacity to rejoice in suffering. If we are killed, it is far better, for we go to be with Christ. If we suffer for Jesus, we rejoice because it is for Him, our great Savior. Hey RiverLakes...we (the church) are an unstoppable force!