

The Apostles Heal Many

12 The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. 13 But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. 14 Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. 15 As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. 16 Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles Meet Opposition

17 The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 20 "Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!"

21 So at daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching.

When the high priest and his officials arrived, they convened the high council—the full assembly of the elders of Israel. Then they sent for the apostles to be brought from the jail for trial. 22 But when the Temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone. So they returned to the council and reported, 23 "The jail was securely locked, with the guards standing outside, but when we opened the gates, no one was there!"

24 When the captain of the Temple guard and the leading priests heard this, they were perplexed, wondering where it would all end. 25 Then someone arrived with startling news: "The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple, teaching the people!"

26 The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them. 27 Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. 28 "Didn't we tell you never again to teach in this man's name?" he demanded. "Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"

29 But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross. 31 Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent of their sins and be forgiven. 32 We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him."

33 When they heard this, the high council was furious and decided to kill them. 34 But one member, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, who was an expert in religious law and respected by all the people, stood up and ordered that the men be sent outside the council chamber for a while. 35 Then he said to his colleagues, "Men of Israel, take care what you are planning to do to these men! 36 Some time ago there was that fellow Theudas, who pretended to be someone great. About 400 others joined him, but he was killed, and all his followers went their various ways. The whole movement came to nothing. 37 After him, at the time of the census, there was Judas of Galilee. He got people to follow him, but he was killed, too, and all his followers were scattered.

38 "So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!"

40 The others accepted his advice. They called in the apostles and had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go.

41 The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. 42 And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah."

Acts 5:12-42 (NLT)

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guides rely heavily on a few other study guides; including: Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A), "Acts: Seeing God's Power in Action" by Phyllis LePeau (ISBN 9780830830077), "Acts: Seeing the Spirit Work" by John Stott (ISBN 0851113907), "Acts" by N.T. Wright (ISBN 9780830821853), "Acts" by NavPress (ISBN 0891091122), "Acts" by Blackaby (ISBN 9781418526429), "Acts: The Spread of the Gospel" by John MacArthur (ISBN 9781418508746), "Book of Acts" by Max Lucado (ISBN 0849953006).

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- Has being a “christian” ever gotten you into trouble or into an awkward situation? Describe
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

v.12-16

- O: After reading v.12-16, we would expect anyone to welcome the wonderful things described in v.12-16. How and why to the religious leaders (High priest and sadducees) react to what was happening (v.17-28)?
- O: v.13 gives insight into how the church was viewed (along with v.17 and beyond)... what characteristics do we (individuals, home group, church) share in common with the early church? How is it different?

v.17-42

- O: This is a long passage. So as a group, summarize the movements of the passage. Ex. 1) church sharing the message of Jesus, Church arrested, Angel breaks church out of jail, etc...
- O: How is the gospel described in v.20?
- O: What are all the ways that the church responded to what the religious leaders did and say/command?
Follow-up: describe the apostles’ motivation and source of strength throughout this passage
Follow-up:What would such faithfulness look like for you and our home group/Church?
- I: One of the fascinating things about the early church (as described in Acts) is that no one knew what to call the movement. It’s only in ch 11 that followers of Jesus are called “Christians.” Many names are given naming this movement, in v.20 it’s called “this message of life.” Why is “this life” or “this message of life” an appropriate designation for faith in Jesus?
- I: This passage says both that the church, as well as the Holy Spirit, were both witnesses to Jesus’ death, and resurrection, and exaltation (v.32). Discuss our role and God’s role in sharing the message of Jesus.
- I: The church leaders rejoiced that they were found worthy to suffer for Jesus’ name (v.41). How could it be an honor for them (and us) to be dishonored?
- A: What lessons can we draw from this passage that are relevant to our lives?
- A: When have you been (or might be) called to speak truth in a situation where it might not be welcomed?
Follow-up: In the face of opposition and grave danger, the church become more bold with the message of Jesus... what is your/our natural tendency when we face opposition? How can we grow in our faithfulness to the gospel message?

Recommended Follow-up:

- Read: Next week’s sermon (9/25/2012) will focus on Acts 6:1-7. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.