

READ: Acts 4:1-31

“Memories of the trial of Jesus must have flooded the apostle’s minds. Was history to repeat itself? Were they to suffer the same fate? Would they too be handed over to the Romans and crucified? They must have asked themselves such questions.”--John Stott, *The Message of Acts*

ACTION: Meal with an acquaintance/friend

SHARE: What was challenging about setting up a time to eat with someone? How was it eating with someone your normally do not? Do you feel like your relationship with the person grew? etc..

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS****I. the TRIAL & TESTIMONY** :: Read Acts 4:1-12

“...as a church they were both suffering sharp persecution and enjoying enormous popularity and broad-based support. They were both attractive and growing, yet hated and attacked... Insensitive, harsh Christians will have persecution but not praise. Cowardly Christians will have praise but not persecution. Most Christians (whose walk with God is weak) actually get neither! But Christians who are closest to Jesus will get both, as he did.” --Evangelism: Studies in the book of Acts, Redeemer Presbyterian Church (NYC)

1. What is the result of the disciples proclaiming the message (4:2-3, 4,)¹? Why would the leaders care? Do you tend to get more praise or persecution as a person? Why should you get both? (quote above)
2. What do you try to hold on to that you do not want the Gospel to re-orient? (what causes you to be anxious? to get defensive? to want to defend? what if taken away....would cause you to fall a part? etc.)
3. What gave Peter power (boldness) (4:8) and how did he respond to the questioning with teaching the gospel? What can you learn from that?

II. the THREAT :: Read Acts 4:13-22

“Ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality.” In other words, what we do is ordinary life together: household chores, trips to the movies, meals, neighborhood volunteering. But running through all these activities is a commitment to *speaking and living the gospel*. We pastor one another at the kitchen sink. We evangelize by talking about Jesus over a meal.”--Steve Timmis, *Total Church*

1. What do the leaders notice about Peter and John (4:13-14) and how can that be an encouragement to you?

¹ For further study of persecution for following Jesus, see Luke 21:12-21; John 15:18-20

2. Read Luke 22:54-62. How is Peter's attitude/conviction different in Acts 4:19-20? What changed?

3. What story do you have from encountering Jesus and continually encountering Jesus? Where has God placed you and who has God placed you with to share His story in your life?

III. TRUSTING TOGETHER :: Read Acts 4:23-31

"Prayer is the language of a man burdened with a sense of need"--E.M. Bounds

1. Where do Peter and John go and what do they do after being released (4:23-24)? What is the importance of community with others and community with God?

2. Break down how the followers prayed (vs. 24-30) (how did they start? what words did they use? what did they ask for? what was their posture? etc..) What was the result (v. 31)?

3. How is the prayer of the disciples different than your prayer life or your notion of what prayer is? What are some things you can implement to grow in this area?

CONNECTING QUESTIONS

1. What are three areas/things you seek to find your identity in (what is your cornerstone? what are you trusting in? etc.) Identify how these things cannot ultimately satisfy you. How can you believe the Gospel to bring freedom?

2. The disciples seek God and receive his Holy Spirit to speak the word of God with boldness (4:8, 4:31). What causes you to not be bold speaking the word of God? How can the group pray for your boldness?

Next weeks action to share:

Do something to help or simply converse with one neighbor on your street.