

Wednesday

Read Acts 5:30 *Telling the story to the council*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why does Peter say that the God of the Jewish people raised up Jesus?*
2. *Why are the priests fearful of Jesus, if they believe he is dead?*

Prayer Focus: Loving God, you put your Spirit into the apostles who had been hiding in fear, leading them out to tell the world that the words of Scripture had been fulfilled. Help us lean on those words, too, and know that you are still actively involved with us and your world.

Thursday

Read Acts 5:31 *The identity of Jesus*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *God sent Jesus to serve as Leader and Savior. How might the priests have responded to that claim?*
2. *What do repentance and the forgiveness of sins meant to you?*

Prayer Focus: Jesus, you made us stop and look around at where we are and what we are doing with the lives God has given us. Thank you for showing us the compassion that says to repent, to turn around and find the right path to follow you where you lead.

Friday

Read Acts 5:32 *Why the disciples must speak*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *The apostles are establishing their identity to the council. What is your identity in Christ?*
2. *The Holy Spirit is given to those who follow Christ. How is the Holy Spirit guiding you? How is it guiding our church?*

Prayer Focus: God of all, the resurrection made all things new, just as you promised. We identify ourselves as Easter People, as Christians, because of your saving acts. Change our hearts, change our beliefs, so we can live in your promise and be known as a blessing to the nations.

A Surprising Turnaround

The high priest admonishes Peter and apostles for teaching in Jesus' name after being instructed not to do so. They respond, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

In spite of Peter's doubt, God surprises him with nets full of fish people full of food (and 12 full baskets left over), and finally the tomb empty of the body of his Savior. Now Peter surprises us! The resurrection can spark changes in our beliefs and behavior that surprise even ourselves.

Message Notes:

Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *Have you ever changed your mind about something important? How did that happen? Were you surprised by the change?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

- Have someone read **Acts 5:27-32**. Discuss observations about the text.
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

April 28, 2019

Surprise! The Unexpected Acts of God



Monday

Read Acts 5:27-28 *The high priest's complaint*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What do you think the apostles were teaching or doing that they were "filling Jerusalem?"*
2. *Why were the priests worried that the apostles were teaching in Jesus' name?*

Prayer Focus:

Gracious God, you are the only one who could have breathed life into the people of Jerusalem, and you are still the one who can fill us up with the truth of your love. You sent Jesus to us to remind us that you are the God who really cares. We bless your name, our God.

Tuesday

Read Acts 5:29 *The disciples' answer*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *It took a lot of courage for the apostles to say this to the priests and the temple police. What does it mean to obey human authority?*
2. *What does it mean to obey God's authority in your life?*

Prayer Focus:

Reflect on how the courage of the apostles still resonates for us today. Consider how their stories, their insistence on telling the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection sustain us still today, and light a path to guide us as we live each day.