



THE BOOK OF

ACTS

GROUP DISCUSSION | Week 5: This New Life

SERIES OVERVIEW

In this series, we examine the remarkable spread of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Despite challenges from outside and within, the Kingdom of God continued to advance. The same is true today.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Think of this discussion guide as a springboard. Use what's helpful to your group and lean into discussion that's sparked from the insight and input of your group.

CONNECTION

Micah opened with a story about a trip to Yellowstone and how the experience was so incredible, he wanted everyone to hear about it. What's an experience you've had that was so good you just had to share?

In a similar way, after the Apostles experienced the resurrection of Jesus and the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit, they were intent on sharing with all who would listen and nothing was stopping them. But it didn't mean persecution waned; instead, it heightened. That's what the rest of our conversation will unpack.

TRUTH

Read Acts 5:17. Why were the high priest and the council so opposed to the teachings about Jesus?

Read Acts 5:18-19. If we're not careful, it's easy to skim right through a passage like this and miss the miraculous right in front of us. Try to imagine what that scene would have been like; not knowing if or when you'd ever get out of jail, but all of a sudden...an angel appears and sets you free! Try to describe how you might have felt in that moment. What do you think is the significance of the angel of the Lord freeing the apostles from prison?

Read Acts 5:20-21. How did the Apostles continue to spread the Gospel despite the threats and persecution they faced? What does this passage tell you about God? About the Holy Spirit? And about Jesus followers?

So the Apostles get arrested, are miraculously freed, and then are seized again. We pick up here: Read Acts 5:27-29. What jumps out to you from this section? This becomes a turning point in the conversation as Peter again presents the Gospel. How can we learn to seize opportunities to be good news and share good news like Peter does here?

After listening to Gamaliel's wise words, the council agrees to free the Apostles...but not before beating them and issuing a stern warning. Read Acts 5:40-42.

APPLICATION

While being flogged (brutally whipped, mutilated, and beaten) for preaching in the Name of Jesus, it's not a far jump to imagine the Apostles would have been reminded of Jesus' own suffering and flogging prior to his crucifixion. Yet instead of wallowing in the torment, they rejoiced as "they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." What lessons can we learn from the Apostles' perseverance and bravery in sharing their faith?

Think back to Peter's response in verse 29 (have someone reread it). Peter, like Jesus, presented truth in love and trusted the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his life and in others. Have you ever been faced with a decision you felt put you at odds with others because of your faith? How did you navigate that? How can we learn to better approach those situations with love, mercy, and boldness?

Micah closed by singing "This Little Light of Mine." Though simple, it's profound. What are 3 ways you can intentionally shed light this week?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying for boldness to share the Gospel when opportunities arise - despite persecution - on any level.

Also, take time to pray for Christians around the globe who face persecution for the faith, including these two NorthEast Mission Partners: City for the Nations (Nepal) and ELIC (Middle East and Asai). For more information, go to ncclex.org/missions | cityforthenations.com | elic.org