

Week 4

Discussion Group Questions

His Kingdom Comes...in Love
Acts 4:32-5:42



1. *What impacted you from last week's message?
2. *What do you notice about the progression of these events in the history of the early church? How do the power (Acts 4:33), grace (Acts 4:33), and fear (Acts 5:11) of the Lord affect the church and those around them?
3. *What does this passage tell you about God's authority and the role of the church?
4. *What individual characteristics do you see which contributed to the unity and oneness that the body experienced? Do you see these same characteristics in your own heart?
5. *What can you do to promote unity in the body of believers in our own church? How can you be a better steward of the possessions that God has given you in regards to the needs of our own body and the believers around you?
6. *What do you think motivated Ananias and Sapphira's sinful response?
7. *In verse 3, Peter tells Ananias that Satan had "filled (or controlled) his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit". What does it look like for a believer to allow the flesh to control them and what does it look like for a believer to be controlled by the Holy Spirit? Read Romans 8:5-13 and record what you learn.
8. *Look at verses 12-14. What were some of the outcomes of all the things that have just transpired? What was the result of the purifying of the church?
9. *What is your reaction to the way that the Lord worked in the early church during this time? How can these events encourage and influence us as a church today?
10. *What are some times where Peter's response to the high priest would be applicable in your own life, "We must obey God rather than men." When might this response be an excuse to do what I want rather than what is right?
11. *Think about the apostles' response in verse 41-42 to the persecution they faced. How can their response encourage and help you when you face trials and suffering?

Week 4 Listening Guide

His Kingdom Comes...in Persecution
Acts 6-8:8



1. _____ for persecution. (6:1-7)

2. _____ persecution. (6:8-15)

3. _____ to persecution. (7:1-53)

Week 4 Homework

His Kingdom Comes...in Persecution
Acts 6-8:8



Day One

PRAY: Ask the Lord to teach you more about Himself this week, and show you areas of your life where He would like to bring change in response to His word.

MEMORIZE: This week we will memorize Acts 6:7. Write the memory verse on the lines below or on a notecard to use for reference and meditation throughout this week.

STUDY: In our study of Acts so far we have learned how the church of Jesus began and grew through the work of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the disciples. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus promised that He would build His church and the gates of Hell would not be able to conquer it. However, that doesn't mean that Satan will not try to overcome the church. This week we will learn how the early church members put aside their fear in response to conflict from within and increased persecution from outside. The result is the growth of the church in Jerusalem and beyond.

Please read Acts 6-8:8.

1. On the lines below record the power words and key ideas that you notice in this passage.

2. Write out a brief timeline of the events in this passage.

3. *What do you learn about God and His role in the church from what you have read today?

Prayerfully commit yourself to studying the word this week and allowing the Spirit to lead you to application for your life.

Day Two

PRAY: As you study today, ask the Lord to show you how you can learn from the apostles' example in this passage.

MEMORIZE: Read or say Acts 6:7 out loud several times. Try to fill in the blanks below without looking back. And the _____ of _____ continued to _____, and the number of the disciples _____ in Jerusalem, and a great many of the _____ became _____ the _____.

STUDY: In our study today, we will see how the apostles managed another crisis. This time, complaints arose between various groups in the church in Jerusalem. In their response, the apostles established a structure for meeting physical needs, while maintaining their devotion to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Please read Acts 6:1-7

1. Briefly describe the conflict from the position of the widows and from the position of the apostles.

2. What solution was proposed and how was it received?

3. What can you learn from this incident about conflict resolution and managing complaints?

4. What does this passage teach about the priorities of church ministry?

5. *In evaluating your own life, do you tend to prioritize the ministry of the word? Or the ministry of meeting physical needs? What can you do to balance these priorities in your life?

Close your time in prayer by sharing with the Lord how you feel led to respond to the passage you have studied today.

Day Three

PRAY: Ask the Lord to give you further understanding about how to respond to those who may dispute the truth of the Word.

MEMORIZE: Read Acts 6:7 or say it from memory out loud. Emphasize the words that are most impactful to you.

STUDY: For the remainder of our study this week we will focus on the witness of Stephen. Being unsuccessful in dividing the church through internal conflict, Satan begins to press in even more on the believers by bringing false accusations from the outside.

Please read Acts 6:8-15.

1. Based upon Acts 6, how would you describe Stephen?

2. How does Jesus' promise in Luke 21:14-15 hold true for Stephen?

3. Why do you think those disputing with Stephen resorted to making false accusations against him?

4. *From verse 15, what does it mean to "have the face of an angel"? What would it look like for you to "have the face of an angel" during times of conflict or accusations?

5. Stephen faced false accusations and opposition as a result of godly character and testimony. Have you ever experienced this? How do the words of Matthew 5:10-12 reassure you?

Thank the Lord for Stephen's example of faithfulness. Share with Him what you will do in response to what you have learned today.

Day Four

PRAY: Begin today by asking the Lord to show you how you can apply the truths you will study today.

MEMORIZE: Try to recall Acts 6:7 from memory without looking. Write the entire verse on the lines below.

STUDY: In Acts 6 Stephen was accused of speaking blasphemy against Moses/the Law and against the temple. For a 1st century Jew these were grievous charges. Today we will study Stephen's response to these false accusations. At first glance, it appears that he simply gives a history lesson, but in fact he is pointing out that the nation of Israel often rejected the truth and those who delivered the message of truth.

Please read Acts 7:1-53

1. From Acts 7:25-29 and 35-41

a. How did the people of Israel treat Moses?

b. What did they prefer rather than obedience to Moses and the Law?

2. From Acts 7:44-50

a. What do you learn about the place of worship for the people of Israel?

b. What conclusions could be made about true worship of the Lord from these verses?

3. Based upon verses 51-53, rather than defending himself, what do you think was the purpose of Stephen's message?

4. *In what situations do you need to be bold in speaking the truth about the bad news of sin while also pointing to the good news of Jesus? What do you learn from Stephen's example?

5. *How do modern people misplace their worship - focusing on people, places, and ideas rather than on the Lord and the truth of the word? What do you tend to focus on rather than worship of Christ as your King?

Close your study time today by telling the Lord about your desire to worship Him alone.

Day Five

PRAY: Ask the Lord to soften your heart to receive His word and to allow the Spirit to bring conviction and encouragement from this passage.

MEMORIZE: Review Acts 6:7. What does this verse teach you about the church?

STUDY: In Hebrews 4:12 we learn that the word of God is sharp and pierces the heart, but rather than responding with repentance as in Acts 2:37, those who heard Stephen's message became enraged and turned on him viciously. This event marks a change in how the Jews responded to the message of the gospel, but even this brutality was used by the Lord to spread the good news beyond Jerusalem.

Please read Acts 7:54-8:8

1. *From Acts 7:54-60

a. How did the listeners respond to Stephen's charges in verse 51-53?

b. Describe Stephen's response to these events.

c. In what ways does it seem significant that Jesus was standing to greet Stephen?

d. When do you need to focus on eternal things rather than the noise and chaos around you?

2. From Acts 8:1-8

a. How did the events of Acts 7 serve to fulfill Jesus' words from Acts 1:8?

b. The result of all of this was much joy (v. 8). How did you come to know the joy of recognizing Jesus as Lord of your life?

c. What can you do each day to keep the joy of knowing Jesus as your King top-most in your mind?

3. *How are you encouraged as you think of Jesus standing in heaven to greet you (Acts 7:56)? In what ways does this image bring conviction?

Close your study by praising the Lord for what you have learned this week. Commit to obedience in any way that you have been challenged by the Scripture you have studied.