

ICB COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY

WHAT WE DO: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS

The message last Sunday, continued our series "What We Do". Pastor John shared about the persecution of the disciples and their attitude of putting Jesus first, no matter what.

START

Mother Teresa once said, "We can do no great things only small things with great love." Our worship of the Lord is not about big acts but all the seemingly insignificant things we do in love. Take a minute and make a list of all the activities you are involved in on any given day. List your work and your chores around the house and anything else you do regularly. Now lets take these things and pray that God will help us make them all acts of living worship and that we will do everything in love, no matter what it is. After praying alone, share your insights/thoughts with the rest of the group.

SHARE

- From the study of Acts thus far, as the disciples' preaching grew in intensity, what other things intensified? How are they all related?

READ ACTS 5:17-42

- What connections do you see between the last verses we read (5:12-16) and today's passage?
- Who are the key actors in this passage? Do you identify with any of them? What strikes you most? And what questions does this passage raise for you?
- Describe the apostles response, motivation and source of strength throughout this whole episode.
- What does it mean to be considered "worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name?" Why would this be an honour?
- Why do you think God intervened in their imprisonment, but allowed the beating to happen? Would you question God's goodness in that? Why didn't the apostles?
- How did the apostles renew their courage to return to the temple courts to preach after having been arrested? (Relate this to their prayer in Acts 4:24-30)
- We know very little about Gamaliel, yet he played a very important part in the release of the apostles from prison. There is only one other passage in the Bible that talks about him, read Acts 22:3. Compare Gamaliel's wisdom and motives with that of the rest of the Sanhedrin. What insight did Gamaliel have about the character of God?

GROW

- What have you experienced from Christ that would motivate joy in persecution? What would it take for your joy in the gospel to more closely match the apostles'?
- How does knowledge about God's character help us in our daily living as we face difficulties?
- In his message Pastor John shared the importance of giving up control and putting our lives *in* Jesus, instead of trying to *fit* Jesus into our lives. Are there any areas in your life where you find it hard to give over complete control to God?
- What changes (in your daily routine, your attitudes, your thought life, your actions) do you need to make, to keep Jesus at the centre?

PRAY

Ask God to help you let go of those things which are taking His place in your life, and surrender to Him. Pray that you can trust Him just as the disciples did, whatever circumstances may come your way.

GO

As we go into this week be aware of those moments when we are trying to regain control of our lives and continue to ask God to help you put Him first. As we seek to put God first and us second, everything else will take on a new perspective. Be encouraged that even in the most difficult moments we can know that God is our source of joy, comfort and confidence. As it says in Philippians 4:13, we can do ALL THINGS through HIM who gives us strength.

Read more about the persecution of the believers in Acts 5:17-42.