

## The Church is Born: “Reliable Resources for a Rough Road”

### Growth Group Discussion Guide

Acts 4:1-22

#### Intro questions

- Have you ever experienced resistance on account of your Christian faith? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what is one thing that has surprised you about following Jesus?
- Take a moment to pray, asking for God’s Spirit to lead your discussion.

#### 1. Read Acts 4:1-22, then discuss the following.

- Pastor Josh said that *if we serve Jesus, if we do anything in his name, there will be resistance and it will become costly.*
  - Jesus predicted that this would happen. Read the following verses:
    - Luke 6:22
    - Luke 12:11-12
    - Luke 21:12-19
  - Why would Jesus make the blanket statement that his followers would be treated in these ways?
  - Is there something inherent to being a Christ-follower, which would account for this kind of treatment?
- Does anything about your current experience of serving Jesus feel especially costly, or challenging? Please share.

#### 2. In today’s passage, we see three resources that enable us to keep our faith, keep sharing Jesus with others, and continue serving him in spite of the resistance. Discuss the following.

- In v. 8, we see that Peter’s defense speech is empowered by the Holy Spirit. On Sunday, we learned that we have this same **Invisible Power**.
  - In some of the passages we read (above), we saw that Jesus promised to give us the words we need in times of resistance, through his Spirit living in us. Have you ever experienced this taking place? Please share an example (or several).
- When you think of talking about Jesus with non-believing people, do you feel intimidated? Why or why not?
  - What difference might it make if you waded into those conversations, trusting in the Holy Spirit to give you what you need?
- In vv. 18-20, we also see that we have an **experiential reality**, which keeps us speaking about Jesus.
  - John Stott once said, “Nothing shuts the mouth, seals the lips, and ties the tongue like the secret poverty of our own spiritual experience. We do not bear witness for the simple reason that we have no witness to bear...If the Bread of life has evidently not satisfied us, why should non-Christians suppose it will satisfy them?”
  - In your own words, what is Stott saying here? Does this statement resonate with you in any way?
- How have you found Jesus to become an undergirding, spiritual reality in your life? How does this impact your ability to talk about him or serve him?

- What kinds of daily practices or experiences have helped you to embrace Jesus in this way?
- We also have a **life-changing story** (vv. 9-10), consisting of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and the difference he has made in our lives.
  - Why are the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus indispensable components of sharing him with others?
  - How is your own story a critical part of your witness?
- In v. 12, Peter effectively calls his hearers to respond to the message about Jesus. What do you think of Peter's remark here?
  - Have you ever invited someone to respond to Jesus? How did that go?
- Pastor Josh said on Sunday that today's passage is an example of the following principle: **"You can arrest Christians, but you can't arrest the gospel!"** Do you agree? Why or why not?
  - Does this principle have any practical bearing on your current situation? Why or why not?
- **Application:** Thinking about the resistance or challenges you are currently facing, which one of the resources we discussed seems to be most helpful for you? What action steps might you need to take to embrace it?
  - In what other ways can our group support you in what you are currently facing?
  - Did anything else in today's passage speak to you in a way that you would like to share?

### 3. Prayer

- Spend some time praying about the challenges and resources you have discussed. Pray especially that the Holy Spirit will make Jesus an experiential reality in each of your hearts.
- Take time to share and pray for other needs in your group members' lives.