

ACTS

A MOVEMENT BEGINS

GUIDE BOOK 2

ACTS



A MOVEMENT BEGINS

STUDY 4

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

ACTS 2:43 & ACTS 3

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

What have you seen lately that has utterly amazed you?

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EXPLORING TOGETHER

In our Growth Groups, we've been using what's known as the 'Swedish Method'. It's a way of giving us time to process what's there in the passage and to get discussion going on what we've observed. Follow the directions below and note down some of your own observations and thoughts. Then we'll discuss what you've found!

Light Bulb. Write down any interesting observations you get from the passage. This includes things that stand out, repeated ideas/words or something you found unusual.

Question Mark. Any questions from the text or an issue or point that doesn't make sense from the passage. Questions are great! They encourage us to think a bit harder about the passage and its implications. They also give us a chance to help each other understand Scripture better.

Arrow. Note down any reflections on things you found challenging or applicable to you. The bible addresses our heads, hearts and hands, or if you like, our thoughts, attitudes and actions so reflect on whether the passage addresses any of these.

Read Acts Acts 2:43 & Acts 3 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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After your group time of discussing the passage using the Swedish Method, if you have any time left, choose any of the questions from the 'Digging Deeper' or 'Bringing it Home' sections.



DIGGING DEEPER

1. Given an earlier description of the church in Acts 2:45, what's the contrast that seems to be offered with this man who's part of the old covenant community? (see Deuteronomy 15:7,8)

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2. Jesus had previously done this miracle (see Luke 5:17-26) so what does that say about this moment with Peter?

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3. What's remarkable about the way that Peter responds to the crowd's astonishment at the miracle that took place? (v11-13)

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4. What contrast does Peter offer between what the crowd did and what God did?

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5. Luke provides detail about the state of this man's condition and the healing that takes place (v7-8, v16). What are we supposed to get out of this?

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6. How is Jesus described in these verses? What is Israel's great advantage over the nations?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

7. Back in 2:43 we're told that within the church everyone was filled with awe at the many signs and wonders performed through the apostles. We're also told that the crowd was filled with awe at the healing of the lame man (3:10). Do you think there's any difference between these two 'awes'? Why?

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8. What do you find comforting and good about the apostle Peter's description of salvation – for all those who repent and turn to the Lord? (v17-20)

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9. Wonders and signs had the purpose of attesting/accrediting to Jesus (Acts 2:22), and they had the same purpose when it comes to wonders and signs done by the Apostles (3:12-16). How should this give us confidence today?

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 **PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH**

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BIBLE TALK NOTES

Sunday 11 August

ACTS 2:43 & ACTS 3

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

STUDY 5

THE UNSTOPPABLE CHURCH

ACTS 2:47 & 4:1-31

EXPLORING TOGETHER

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Read Acts 2:47 & 4:1-31 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. Jerusalem's religious leaders opposed Peter and John. They put them in prison (4:3), commanded them to cease speaking "in the name of Jesus" and of the resurrection (4:17-18), and made further threats to them (4:21). Yet, these Jews could not deny that the lame beggar was miraculously healed in Chapter 3 (4:14-17).

What then was the nature of their opposition and why did they go to such great lengths to restrict the apostles?

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What does this ultimately reveal about their beliefs and heart attitude toward Jesus Himself – the risen, reigning and actively-working King?

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2. Despite such strong opposition, thousands of Jews believed in the resurrected Jesus after hearing the words of the apostles and praised God for His works (4:4, 4:21). God was saving the Jews as He had promised (3:26).

How does God's power compare to the human powers in this passage? What does this tell us about the Triune God's ability and commitment to redeem His people?

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3. The experience of Peter & John resembles Christ's while He was on earth. This is highlighted both by the events in this passage that mirror Jesus' experience in Luke's Gospel and the fulfilled Scripture in the collective prayer (4:1-2, 4:7-8, 4:14-20; 4:24-30). The early church Body of Christ followed their Head.

How does this passage shape our view of what union with Christ looks like (participation in both His resurrection and sufferings)? How were they able to persevere and endure amidst hardship?

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4. In their prayer, what was their understanding of God and how did this shape the essence of their request (4:24-30)? What is Luke intending to emphasise to the early church through to the content and structure of this prayer?

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5. God's people were "filled with the Holy Spirit" and spoke of Jesus boldly at multiple points in this passage (4:8, 4:13, 4:19-20, 4:31). What does this tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church's expansion of the Word?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

6. The opposition of the Jewish leaders or the lowly societal status of the apostles did not stop God from continuing to powerfully work His saving grace. The Father's plan to redeem His people through His resurrected Son by the power of the Holy Spirit continues.

How does God's faithfulness and sovereignty provide comfort, confidence or encouragement for us today? How does it shape or challenge how we perceive and respond to opposition?

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7. How do you think we as Christ Central are going with being a church that boldly proclaims and follows Jesus (in and out of our weekly gathering)?

Why do you think this may be? Consider what beliefs, attitudes or behaviours may contribute to the current state of our church's boldness.

E.g. Do we live as if Jesus has resurrected and is reigning, or do we forget His rule and power to save? Are we concerned with what is "right in God's eyes", or do we live for the opinions of people, the culture and the world around us?

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8. How may we spur one another on throughout the week to live confidently in the powerful grace of God and in light of Jesus' resurrection that empowers us to boldly embrace and spread His saving Word?

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PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

Spend some time praising God for who He is and his saving work through our reigning Lord Jesus. Ask for the Spirit's help to give Christ Central boldness, confidence and perseverance that more people may hear, believe and be saved in Jesus' name.

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HE HOPE
EXPLORED

A 3 WEEK SERIES

FRIDAY Mornings 13, 20, 27 SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY Nights 18, 15, 22 OCTOBER

christcentral.org.au/hope

STUDY 6

THE LOVING CHURCH

ACTS 2:44-45 & 4:32-5:16

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

Here's a personal question! Tell the group about a significant purchase lately? Or tell us what tends to be a prized possession at the moment?

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Read Acts 2:44-45 & 4:32-5:16 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. There's a clear parallel between the incident of Ananias and Sapphira and the moment that involved Achan and God's judgement on Israel in Joshua 7. In both of these instances, what do we learn that God cares about? And how do you react to this yourself?

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2. It's been said that the remarkable early church is displaying 'Spirit-led voluntary socialism'! What do we learn that Ananias and Sapphira were doing in withholding some of the proceeds of the sale of their property (Acts 5:3-4, 9)?

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3. The apostles are mentioned a number of times in this passage - 4:33, 35, 37, 5:2, 5:12, 15 - what are they doing and how would you describe their role?

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4. This passage contains a few 'greats' – great power (4:33), great grace (4:33) and great fear (5:5,11). And in the midst of it all – the church is growing! (5:14). How would you describe the church at this point?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

5. Ananias and Sapphira wanted to be seen in a certain way, despite their real actions and heart. This is hypocrisy. How are we apt to be hypocrites in God's church today? And what should be our response to what we see in our own hearts?

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6. How should the story of Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira challenge us in practical ways when it comes to being a united and loving church in the use of our wealth and possessions?

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7. Can you think of ways that you can be sacrificially generous towards others in ways, when you might otherwise just keep things for yourself?

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 **PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH**

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FATHERS DAY AT CHRIST CENTRAL

Invite family and friends for our special Father's Day at Christ Central.



BIBLE TALK NOTES

Sunday 25 August

ACTS 2:44-45 & 4:32-5:16

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

STUDY 7

THE SUBVERSIVE CHURCH

ACTS 5:17-42

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

Has there ever been a time where you've had to stand up for something in the face of opposition? What was that like?

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Read Acts Acts 5:17-42 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. Acts 5:17-42 holds a similar storyline to what we see in Acts 4:1-21 (The arrest of Peter & John). What are some of the similarities and differences in these two accounts given by Luke?

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2. Read John 15:18-20, Philippians 1:27-30 and James 1:2-4. Then re-read Acts 5:40-42.

a. How are these passages helpful in understanding why the apostles were rejoicing in their suffering?

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a. Why are we told that suffering goes hand in hand with living for Jesus and proclaiming the gospel?

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3. We see a rebellious and subversive church here in Acts 5:17-42, but it's not without cause. What are the reasons for the disciples to go against these religious leaders?

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4. Of all people, a highly respected Pharisee convinces the Sanhedrin (the religious ruling court made up of Pharisees and Sadducees) to not kill the apostles. God uses Gamaliel to free his apostles so they can continue spreading the good news of Jesus. Gamaliel argues it would be unwise to go against the apostles, as they run the risk of going against God himself! (vs 39). Why was Gamaliel's argument an effective one for the Sanhedrin?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

5. The Apostles were boldly, and rebelliously proclaiming the truth of the gospel. How might we as a church proclaim and live out the gospel in a way that doesn't bend to the world's rejection of it?

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6. In what ways might we be tempted to bend or ignore the truth for the sake of fitting in? How can we combat that as a church?

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7. What are some circumstances you've faced where you've been tempted to conceal your faith, or keep quiet about what you believe?

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8. How can we as a growth group (and more broadly as a church), support and encourage each other to proclaim the gospel in the face of adversity and opposition?

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