

Community Group Discussion Questions

“The Provision”

Acts 5:1-11

Sermon Series Title: “Church Beginnings”

Sermon Series Summary: From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

Setting: The book of Acts is a transitional book between the resurrection of Jesus and the established local churches of the epistles. With Jesus’ call to the church in Acts 1, we see how the gospel spreads to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth.

Summary: We find ourselves in the aftermath of sin in the early church. However, instead of finding fallenness, we find fruitfulness. Signs and wonders are performed by the apostles at a glorious level, and the church is growing significantly. We see that God is answering the church’s prayer from ch. 4 and is continuing the work of Christ through the church.

Sermon Points:

1. The Setting
2. The Signs
3. The Significance
4. The Savior

Main Idea: *“Though broken by sin, God still works through the church for His kingdom and glory.”*

Before you read the passage...

1. How would you feel if there was a sin controversy in your church? How would you respond to it? How do you think God is glorified in it?

(Answers may vary.)

After last week’s passage, we see death and sin in the church. The sin was addressed, but the situation had the potential of breaking apart God’s people. We see what happens afterwards in our passage.

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Read Acts 5:12-16

2. What do we learn about God's sovereignty and the church's identity and calling in our passage?

(In chapter 4, we saw that oppression and persecution cannot stop God's work in and through the church. In our passage today, we see that even sin and Satan cannot stop God's work for the church. Through our passage, we see that God answers the prayer found in 4:30 for signs and wonders in the church. We see that the great fear from the judgment upon sin in the previous passage actually leads to faith for many. God is still in control.

In the same way, we have the promises of God for the church. In the Great Commission, we know that Jesus will be with us till the end of the age. We know from Philippians 1 that God will bring to completion the work He has started for us, and we know that He will present us blameless on the last day in glory from Ephesians 5. Lastly, we see from Matthew 16 that Christ will build His church and that even the gates of hell will not prevail against her. God will build us up in His sovereignty in accordance with His promises.

Our identity is rooted in God's promises, fulfilled through Jesus. We are His church, His bride, and His people. Because He has redeemed us by His blood, He is with us, and the Holy Spirit resides in us. Now, we are able and called to continue His work of redemption and restoration to a world that needs to know Jesus- minister to the needy and proclaim Christ. We are able to be righteous enough to be held in high esteem and holy enough to be set apart. We are able to be the hands and feet of Christ to this world.

Lastly, I want to affirm for us that the same Christ that saved the early church is the Christ that saves us. The same Holy Spirit that resided in the early church is the Holy Spirit that resides in us. We are part of this same story, God's story, of redemption and restoration in this world.)

3. According to this passage, how are we called to engage with this world?

(I've shared this before, but there are four main ways to engage with this world. First, it's isolation. This means that we don't just live SET APART from the world, but we live SEPARATE from the world. Christians try to isolate themselves away from corruption and sins of this world so much that they exclude those who are not Christians. But the church cannot obey the Great Commission through this engagement.

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Second, it's assimilation. This means that we adopt the world's values, ethics, and beliefs. We blend in with the world. However, the church loses the gospel and the message of Christ through this engagement.

Third, it's domination. The Christians try to take over and force our ethics, beliefs, government, and law on the world around us. We try to convert people to the faith by use of force. This engagement is fundamentally wrong, since it believes that it's people who change people. This does not give room for people to receive Christ by grace through faith. Instead, it's by force.

I believe the last way is the most biblical way. I call it salt and light faithfulness. We are called to be in the world but not of the world. We are salt and light of the world- Matthew 5, giving life, seasoning the world with grace, and showing the truth of the gospel to the world. We are called to seek the peace and prosperity of the city- Jeremiah 29.

I believe that this last form of engagement is what the early church is doing. They are meeting at the temple, a worship place of non-Christians. They are ministering to the people from surrounding towns. They live as salt and light, so much so that non-Christians were not a part of them but held them in high esteem.)

4. How does this passage humble, encourage, and challenge you with your faith and church perspective?

(This passage is a great reminder of God's sovereignty even when there is brokenness in the church. It also shows us that we are called to be righteous and holy, so much so that we are held in high esteem and also set apart. Lastly, it calls us to be hands and feet of Christ. We are to continue His work of redemption, ministering to the needy while proclaiming the gospel.

We are able to do this, because Christ has done it first for us. He was naked, poor, hungry, thirsty, and imprisoned, so that we may be clothed, rich, satisfied, and set free. Jesus has loved us so much first, so that we may love others for Him.

Final Thoughts: *If there is sin in a church like the early church, then there is also sin in a church like ours. However, that does not mean that God is not in control and His purposes are thwarted. No, instead, we see that God is faithful to answer prayer, to fulfill His purposes, to build up His church, and to advance the gospel through Word and Deed. This is possible, because the same Christ that saved and the same Holy Spirit that resided in the early church are the same Christ and Holy Spirit for us. Be encouraged by God's faithfulness, and be empowered to continue Christ's work in and through the church.*