

## Family Worship Guide – Week 3

### READ

After receiving the promised Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the early church was not only marked by unity and growth but also persecution. It was the popularity of the Christians that filled the Jewish leaders with jealousy and prompted them to persecute the Christians. The apostles and other Christians at this stage were persecuted not because they were simply Christians but because they were successful. This threatened the Jewish leadership and caused them to try to stamp out this new movement.

Acts 5:12-42

Just as Jesus' miracles prompted the Jewish leadership to react sharply against Him, so too the Jewish leaders were filled with jealousy and imprisoned the apostles as they healed the sick and demon-possessed. As they were waiting to be questioned by the Sanhedrin (i.e., the Jewish high court) God intervened, and during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and let them out. When the Jewish officers went to bring the apostles to trial they were informed that the apostles were "standing in the temple and teaching the people" (v. 25), which was in complete defiance of the strict orders previously given them by Jewish leaders (4:18). As a result the Jewish officers seized the apostles as they were speaking to the people in the temple and brought them before the Sanhedrin. Once again they were ordered by the Jewish authorities not to teach in the name of Jesus (v. 28). Peter and the rest of the apostles responded boldly by asserting that they "must obey God rather than men" (v. 29). The Sanhedrin were enraged once again at the defiance and accusations of the apostles and therefore wanted to kill them. However, Gamaliel, "a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people" (v. 34), stood up and gave orders to his colleagues on the Sanhedrin not to kill the apostles, but instead to wait on the outcome of the apostles' movement. If the movement were of human origin, he said, it would ultimately fail; however, if it were from God then no one would be able to overthrow them.

The Sanhedrin abided by Gamaliel's orders and did not have the apostles put to death. Instead, they had them flogged and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus. In spite of being severely beaten, the apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing. They were honored to be suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus. The apostles took no notice of the orders and flogging they had received. Instead, they continued to meet both in the temple courts and from house to house, where they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news.

#### Questions:

Why do you think the apostles rejoiced when they suffered for Jesus?

Was it right for the apostles to not obey what the Jewish authorities commanded them to do? Why or why not?

Even after being imprisoned and suffering the apostles continued to proclaim to others about Jesus. What often keeps you from sharing the good news of Jesus with your friends and others? Who can you share Jesus with this week?

**The Bottom Line:** There is great cost and joy in following Jesus.

### PRAY

This week we'll be focusing part of our prayer time on holiness in the life of the church and the life of the believer. Holiness is at the very heart of God's character. Repeatedly, God is described as holy (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). He is unstained by sin and unlike anything or anyone in creation. He is utterly praiseworthy and exalted. As such, He demands that His people reflect his holy character (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:14-15). The problem with this demand, of course, is our sin. We are thoroughly fallen and decidedly unholy apart from His grace. But praise God, Jesus has lived the holy life we should have lived and died the unholy death we should have died. Furthermore, God showed the holiness and complete perfection of Jesus by raising Him from the dead. Truly, Jesus is our holiness and righteousness before God. The church is counted as holy because Jesus is holy. The believer is considered holy because Jesus is holy. Now, in the gospel we praise God for the holiness of Jesus and at the same time pursue holy lives as we seek to live as who we truly are in Christ. So, this week, spend time praising God for the perfect life and death of Jesus, the resurrection which made evident His righteousness, and the acceptance before God we enjoy because of Christ. Also, ask God to fill you with His

Spirit and make you more holy in daily life (1 Thessalonians 5:23) as you seek to become who you are in Christ (Colossians 3:12-13). Finally, ask God to bring about this transformation in our church as well that we might better reflect the holy character of the one who has so radically saved us from our sins. May this be so for the glory of His name, the good of His people, and the salvation of sinners.

Please see the Prayer Card for additional guided prayer this week.

## SING

Filled with difficulties, hardships and even persecution, the path we follow as Christians is indeed, a narrow one. The apostles were well acquainted with the cost of following Jesus, even to their death, but even amidst such animosity, their joy was insurmountable in Christ and their mission could not be hindered. In fact, it was the very persecution of the Church that led to believers scattering throughout the land and the Gospel advancing!

This week our family worship song is 'Our God' by Chris Tomlin. This song is a declaration of God's love and faithfulness to His people. We have a God who is stronger, greater and more powerful than any other thing in the universe and not only that, but our God is for us, and where ever we go our God is with us! This is why we can go to the hard places and not be afraid, because the One who has commanded us to take the Gospel to all nations is also the One who is going with us!

Please follow the link on the website to download and listen to this song together as a family. The lyrics are provided at the end of this guide as a song sheet while you listen and participate.

## MEMORIZE

Acts 5:41-42 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

## SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God's word and worship Him together.

### Preschool

- Before you begin, think of a simple set of instructions that your preschooler can follow (i.e., touch your toes, raise your hands above your head, jump up and down 5 times). Choose a reward for following the instructions when completed successfully (stickers, candy, snack).
- Read Acts 5:42 with your preschooler.
- Go through the series of instructions with your child. Reward them after completing each one of the instructions. Talk to your child about the importance of following directions. Explain that God has a plan, a direction, for each of us and He wants us to follow Him. It is not always easy to follow directions, but with God's help nothing is too hard. God teaches us so that we can teach others. Just like you received a reward for following directions, God rewards His followers with great joy! God sent Jesus!
- Questions: Will following God's plan for us be easy? No, but God is all powerful, nothing is too hard for God, not even prison gates.
- Conclude by re-reading this week's memory verse, Acts 5:42 with your preschooler.

### Children

- As a family, reread Acts 5:29.
- The apostles were ordered by the Sanhedrin not to preach in Jesus' name, yet they had been commissioned by God to proclaim the Gospel.
- Blindfold one of your children and instruct the rest of the family set-up a "minefield" in the room using everyday items: sofa pillows, blankets, kitchen chairs, etc.
- Select one family member to call out directions to the blindfolded child to lead them through the minefield. Direct the rest of the family to call out incorrect directions or make distracting sounds. Allow each family member to take a turn crossing the minefield.

- Just as you had to shut out all competing voices and listen to one person to make your way through the minefield, there are often conflicting authorities in our lives. Children, God has given you clear instruction that when you are faced with conflicting authorities, you are to obey your parents and what God has revealed through His Word.
- Often there will be a high cost when following Jesus. For the apostles the cost was a beating and imprisonment. Have you ever had to pay a "cost" for obeying Jesus? Was it worth it? God's Word tells us that eternal joy will soon be ours.

#### **Students**

- As a family, reread Acts 5:41-42.
- Ask your student to identify things in their life that are important enough to sacrifice other things to accomplish. This can be things such as sports, ballet, band, hobbies, or relationships, etc. Name some things you, or others sacrifice to identify with Jesus. Why are you willing to sacrifice those things?
- The high priest was frustrated with Peter and the apostles for continuing to teach the word of the Lord even after they had been arrested. In verse 29, the apostles were clear on what they were willing to sacrifice and it wasn't man's approval they were seeking. Complete obedience was their goal.
- As a family, discuss some specific instances where your lives were marked by obedience to Christ and His Word.
- Pray as a family and ask the Lord to show you the areas where complete obedience is still needed.

**Lives/Church**

In this week's reading, we see an emphasis upon private and corporate holiness (Acts 5). Of course, this holiness is simply a reflection and product of God's own holiness (Leviticus 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:14-16). First, spend some time meditating upon God's absolute holiness and thanking God for Christ's atoning sacrifice which perfectly satisfies God's demand for holiness (John 19:30). Finally, ask God to bring about more holy living both in your life and in the life of Brook Hills.

**Local**

**Focus:** Focus: Sav-A-Life Ministries

**Local Church:** Liberty Park Baptist, Pastor Scott Guffin

**Monday:** Pray for women in our city who are pregnant and considering abortions that they would see the value of the life in their womb and turn to a ministry like Sav-A-Life for support and direction.

**Tuesday:** Pray for those leading Sav-A-Life Ministries that they would have great wisdom on knowing how best to use their resources and volunteers to help women facing a pregnancy crisis situation.

**Wednesday:** Pray for those providing counsel to women who come to their clinics that they would be filled with wisdom from above in all their conversations.

**Thursday:** Pray that women who are pregnant would embrace their child as a gift from God and choose not to abort that child.

**Friday:** Pray that the Gospel would advance through the ministry of Sav-A-Life.

**Saturday:** Pray about you or your small group becoming involved in Sav-A-Life ministries in some way.

**Global**

**Partner:** This week we are praying for Joel our IMB partner in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Short Term Teams:** Middle East and Atlanta

**Monday:** The Arabian Peninsula is home to 3.5 million Saudis....few of which are Christ followers. Pray God uses Joel's family to make his name known.

**Tuesday:** Pray for the younger people of the Arabian Peninsula to have opportunities to hear and respond to a clear presentation of the Gospel.

**Wednesday:** Pray for Joel's wife to have opportunities to build relationships and share the Gospel with women of the Arabian Peninsula.

**Thursday:** Pray that God will call many women of the Arabian Peninsula to Himself and show them their true value in Him.

**Friday:** Pray for Joel and his family to have faith in the strength of our God, and to boldly and regularly proclaim the Gospel.

**Saturday:** Pray for God to provide multiple persons of peace to train to be reproducing disciples who witness, make disciples and plant churches in their spheres of influence.

**Our God**

by Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves & Jonas Myrin

Water you turned into wine  
 Opened the eyes of the blind  
 There's no one like you  
 None like you

Into the darkness you shine  
 Out of the ashes we rise  
 There is no one like you  
 None like you

Our God is greater  
 Our God is stronger  
 God you are higher than any other  
 Our God is Healer  
 Awesome in power  
 Our God our God

And if our God is for us  
 Then who could ever stop us  
 And if our God is with us  
 Then what could stand against

*Due to copyright limitations, we are only allowed to print the lyrics to this song with no chords. We encourage you to download an mp3 of this song from iTunes.*

**Scripture Memory**

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5:41-42

