

# TAKEAWAY

## EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE



### Part Eleven: Acts 5:12-5:42

*At Maybridge we want to be a church of disciples who make disciples – we hope this takeaway session encourages practical outcomes in the lives of the individuals in your group. The focus of group discussion should be on becoming 'doers of the word' and not just hearers or people who enjoy a good discussion!*

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES

*You don't necessarily need to share these, but be aware as a leader to help steer discussion.*

By the end of this session, we hope to:

- Understand that following Jesus is not always safe, but it is good, and recognise how the Spirit empowers us beyond our natural abilities
- Consider what it means to suffer for Christ's name and find joy in that calling
- Reflect on how the early church's countercultural community challenges us today

#### INTRODUCTION

At the heart of Acts is a message for everyone everywhere, about a person who is for everyone everywhere. In this session, we explore how following Jesus is not always comfortable, or even safe, but it is good. As we unpack the amazing signs and wonders recorded in the account of the early church in Acts, we can begin to recognise how the Spirit transforms and empowers us to share the good news of Jesus beyond our natural abilities and in challenging circumstances.

#### SHARE

- Have you ever felt called to do something that didn't feel comfortable or safe, but seemed right? What happened?
- Describe a moment when you've experienced God's power working through weakness – perhaps through your own limitations or an impossible situation?
- When have you witnessed someone's faith attract others, even when that faith cost them something?

#### READ

**Acts 5:11-42**

#### DISCUSS

So far in our journey through Acts, the early church has experienced rapid growth and has witnessed and performed many miraculous signs and wonders. It's as if the disciples are experiencing what some have come to describe as "thin spaces" – situations or seasons where God's presence is tangible. What does this concept of "thin spaces" mean to you? Where might you encounter such spaces in your own life?

Peter and the apostles responded to intimidation by doubling down on their witness. What gives believers the confidence and courage to do this? How do we develop such conviction?

Gamaliel advises caution about opposing what might be God's work. How do we discern between movements of the Spirit and movements of human ambition? Have you experienced examples of each?

How can our zeal for Jesus sometimes become misdirected into something that is at odds with God's character and values?

How does the early church's countercultural lifestyle of generosity and healing contrast with the violence of the zealots? What does this tell us about the Kingdom of God?

**TRY OUT**

- Consider who you might reach out to in your community - a neighbour, friend, colleague or someone in need - to demonstrate the life of Jesus through both word and deed
- Identify one "unsafe" or "uncomfortable" step of faith God might be inviting you into, and discuss it with your group

**PRAY**

Pray for anything that has come up in the above discussion