

Lake Merced Church of Christ

Home Groups

What Now? - Encouragement of the Holy Spirit

Ice Breaker

Have you ever been confronted with someone who was so good at a certain skill/game/sport that no matter how much you tried, you could not beat them? What were you trying to do and why were they so good at it?

Opening Prayer

Begin your group prayer time by asking God to give you a spirit of boldness and courage to live out your faith in challenging circumstances and to rejoice in the best and worst of times.

Discussion

Read Acts 8-9 together as a group and then discuss the following questions as the Holy Spirit leads.

1. In this week's message, we were introduced to a Church that now finds itself being persecuted, meaning there are people actively trying to kill and imprison because a person believed Jesus. Persecution is often viewed as a bad thing in our culture, yet Acts 5:41 tells us that Peter and John rejoiced "because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus." Do you think persecution could ever be a good thing? What could someone gain from persecution? If persecution can actually bring about gain, what do you think the church could sometimes miss out on by *not* suffering persecution?
2. God used persecution to bring followers of Christ into new cities, communities and territories to teach the Good News, yet with rare exception, the Good News of Jesus has been brought to nearly every community on earth. How do you think Christians living in the US or in San Francisco can be involved in spreading Good News in the world today? How can each of us specifically be involved in spreading Good News?
3. This week's message focused on the transformation of three men: Simon, the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Saul. From Sunday's message, what followed the work transformation of all three when the Holy Spirit showed up? What do you think that says about the importance of joy being present in our lives today?
4. Simon was a man who thought about himself first. The Ethiopian Eunuch was a man who believed, but lacked understanding. Saul was a man who thought he had understanding, but needed to learn the truth about Jesus. Which person's story do you relate to the most? Why?
5. Josh mentioned that two things always happen when the Holy Spirit shows up: Jesus is preached, and what follows is great joy. Why should we be on guard against any place where Jesus is *not* preached, but there *appears* to be joy? Why should we be on guard against any place where Jesus *is* preached, but there is *not* any joy? Can you think of times when one of those two might occur?

Closing Prayer

Close your Home Group by praying for the needs of one another and by thanking God for something specific about the person sitting to your right. Think of one encouraging thing you could pray for where you see evidence of God's work in their life.