

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: March 12th 2017

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: Can't Stop: Won't Stop

Introduction: This passage describes a very early turning point in the life of the church. To this point they had been unopposed and enjoying widespread popularity. Now, the opposition begins. How will they respond?

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: Acts 4:1-22. As you listen to the passage being read try to imagine what it would have been like to be in Peter & John's shoes (or sandals!) during the events described.

Reflect:

- Why do you think the religious leaders were so upset by the apostles' message about Jesus' resurrection in this passage?
 - Are there any similar reasons why people today (either inside or outside of the church) feel threatened by the idea that Jesus is alive and active in the world?
 - How might 'religion' feel more attractive than 'resurrection'?
- What was the substance of the apostles' witness (see v.20)?
 - What was it that they had 'seen and heard'? (see e.g. Luke 24:36-49)?
 - If 'witnessing' is being able to explain to others what we have seen and heard of Jesus
 - does that make it easier or harder to be a witness?
 - how do we prepare to be witness?
 - what would be your story of being with Jesus?

Read: Acts 4:22-31.

Reflect: In the talk, David's four points drawn from this prayer were:

1. **God of Creation, we're not scared (24)**
 - How do people in the group habitually address God in their praying?
 - Look up some of the prayers in the Bible: Nehemiah 1:5; Daniel 2:20-22; Matthew 5:9 then discuss...
 - How does the way we address God in our prayers, affect the way we pray?

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes.

Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

Thornbury Baptist Church:

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2. God of revelation, we're not surprised (25,26)

- The disciples prayed from what God had revealed in Scripture. What wisdom is their in the group about how to combine Scripture and prayer together?
- How can a deeper understanding of God's Word, equip us for a fuller understanding of God's world?
 - Are there any ways recently that group members have interpreted a news item or an incident in their daily life (for example) with reference to something they know is in the Bible?

3. God of purpose, we're not stopping (28)

- The disciples understood that they were part of a bigger story - God's story of healing the world and bringing it back to him. Something God is passionate to fulfil (see Isaiah 9:2-7, and especially v7!).
 - What happens when disciples are intimidated into silence (Romans 10:8-15)?

4. God of power, we're not strong enough (29,30)

- Notice that effective speech is a matter of God's empowering. See how often the gift of the Holy Spirit is linked to *speaking out* for God in the book of Acts (2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 6:10; 10:45-46; 13:2,9; 18:25; 19:6; 20:23; 21:4,11).
- How often do you pray for the anointing of the Spirit to be able to speak out for Jesus?

Spend time praying with one another, basing your prayers on the disciples' prayer that you have just looked at.

And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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