

Small Groups @ TBC
Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of sermon: March 26th 2017

Speaker: Paul Ferguson

Title: Unstoppable Momentum

Introduction: The sermon focused upon the growth of the first church community in Jerusalem. This growth was remarkable because it is set against considerable persecution and hardship. Persecution has been the experience of Christians through the years and today also. Jesus warned his disciples that this would be their experience (John 16: 33) because it was his also (Luke 9: 22). But this hardship would not thwart the onward movement of the gospel.

Review: Invite those who listened to the talk to give a summary.

Read: Acts 5: 12-42

Reflect: Paul used five P's to group his thoughts

1. Power.

The Holy Spirit's power is very evident in the book of Acts and very much so in the early chapters of Acts. This great outpouring is associated with the founding of the church and Apostolic ministry. Why might such an outpouring be needed at the beginning of this new age? Read Joel 2.

The gift of the Spirit in Acts is all most exclusively connected to the ability given to speak and share the gospel. Perhaps you could spend some time praying for one another and asking for power to witness.

2. Luke's Pattern

A repeating pattern we see in the book of Acts is as follows. An obstacle (often persecution) arises, the obstacle is overcome and the gospel is proclaimed. Luke wants his readers to know that nothing can or will thwart the work of the gospel. Can you identify this pattern in the reading - it occurs twice? Can you find other examples of this in Acts? What effect do you think knowing that nothing can thwart the gospel have on the early church? How about us today?

3. Persecution

The Sadducees were not happy with the popularity the Christians were garnering and the potential of this movement upsetting the 'apple-cart' with the Roman authorities. Persecution is part and parcel of church history. The beginnings of the church were overshadowed by persecution and yet it grew

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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exponentially. The church often grows when under pressure. Why might this be? How do you think the church in the UK would stand under persecution?

4. People of Peace

Even though things seemed bad for the Apostles in our reading. They did have an advocate. Gamaliel was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin. Most influential of all Pharisees and a Jerusalem aristocrat. Later rabbis extolled his piety and his learning. He made a very cogent argument as to why they, the Sanhedrin, should lay off the Apostles. What was the basis of his argument? What was good about it? What did he really not get?

5. Preaching

Verse 29-31. Peter says that their, the Apostles, first responsibility is to God: **“We must obey God rather than human beings!** Consider this scripture alongside Romans 13: 1 - 6. How can we square this? Is it to do with context? Remember that the Apostles were declaring their obedience to God over man regarding the proclamation of the gospel.

What would you say is the content of the gospel message? Read verses 20 and 42 and talk about the scope and reach of **the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.**

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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