

WHITFIELD PARISH
St James' Church † St Luke's Church

LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 14 September 2008

Danger : Church at work – What really matters
Acts 4.23 – 37

Last week, I encouraged you to have your prayer time *before* the study. This week, can I get you to share and pray *after* the study? You'll see why later!

1. How have you witnessed the power of God in evangelism, outreach or mission?

The persecution had begun... or you might say that it continued, after all they had crucified Jesus. Peter and John had been arrested after the healing (3:6-7) of the crippled man; they had been interrogated by the Jewish leaders; Peter had preached to them about Jesus and then the Jewish leaders released them commanding them 'not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus'.

Read Acts 4:23-31

Info point...

- ❖ 'Our father David' (v25) is King David, who lived around 1000BC, the greatest of the kings of Israel. The king was often seen as the 'father' of the people.
- ❖ The 'Anointed One' (v26) is the Messiah/Christ... Jesus, predicted by David centuries earlier.
- ❖ 'Herod' (v27) was the King of Judea (where Jerusalem was) but only had as much power as the Romans allowed him. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor and, being Caesar's representative, held the real political and military power.
- ❖ 'The Gentiles' (v27) were the non-Jews (i.e. the Romans) and the 'people of Israel' were... well you work that one out!

2. What is so extraordinary about the response of Peter and James upon their release (v23ff)? Are they just incredibly stubborn!?
3. What would you have done?

In verses 24-28 the believers, as part of their prayer, state how God is:

- (i) the God of creation ("made" v24)
 - (ii) the God of revelation ("spoke" v25)
 - (iii) the God of history ("decided" v28)
4. Why do they do this... as part of a prayer?
 5. So if you followed their example, think of some ways in which this might impact your prayer times, as individuals or as a LIFE group.
 6. What is the *priority* of the believers, as seen in this prayer?

Read Acts 4:32-37

The believers prayed with one voice (v24) and now we see them committed to each other in terms of resources.

7. But this would never happen today, would it?
8. What is the significance of Luke (NB Luke wrote Acts) putting verse 33 in the middle of a passage about sharing material wealth?
9. It's sometimes said that many aspects of Christian living are 'caught not taught'. With giving, or in any other act of *sacrificial ministry*, what is the place of the rôle model (like Barnabas)?
10. Now turn to prayer!