

empowered

----- ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD. -----

Small Group Study #4

Christ's Authority for Mission

Pray and ask God to speak to your group during today's study. Read Acts 6:8-7:1 & 7:48-60

1. In our verses, Stephen stood up and bore witness to Jesus. It ended up costing him his life. However, throughout the encounter Stephen is unshaken and calm. Take a look at verses 54-56. Why do you think Stephen felt peace? How have you found peace in God in the midst of adversity in your life?
2. Read Acts 8:1-3. After Stephen's death, persecution broke out against the church. This led Christians to scatter all throughout Judea and Samaria. The result was the proclamation of the Gospel in new places. The early church father Tertullian famously remarked "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." God routinely uses what the enemy intends for evil and uses it for our good and the good of the Kingdom. How have you seen this at work in your life and in the church?

Read Acts 9:1-19

1. Saul had every opportunity given to him and he was positioned to succeed in life. He was well educated under the esteemed Rabbi Gamaliel, he was born in the diverse city of Tarsus having a knowledge of both Greek and Jewish worldviews, he was a Roman citizen, and became an accomplished Pharisee. As he rounded up Christians for the slaughter, he felt he was doing God's work. One day Jesus appeared to him and changed everything! Saul had everything in life, but missed what God was doing under his nose. In many ways we are like Saul; we live in a very blessed nation, gain excellent educations, and many of us spend a great deal of time in church. What might Saul's experience teach us about staying humble, and being vigilant with our hearts?
2. Ananias knew all about Saul's reputation, and yet was obedient to God's call to help restore his sight. Ananias was willing to open his mind to God's Grace for Saul, and had the courage to step up. Why is it difficult to give people "second chances" and believe they can change? How do you think Ananias overcame this? How can we?

Ask God to powerfully pour out His Grace upon your group:

Grace to stand for Him in the midst of adversity, Grace to stay humble in the midst of abundance, and Grace to see all people, regardless of their history, the way God sees them.

Empowered 7 — Christ's Power in Weakness

Song Ideas

- Sovereign Over Us — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvA9M-pMnWI>
- By Faith — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXB8ihepUpE>

Scripture Ideas

- Romans 8:31-35, 37-39

Reading / Prayer

Almighty and ever present God, you uphold heaven and earth and all creatures. All things come from your generous hand: You send the nourishing rain, the refreshing wind, the warming sun, the blustering snow. You make buds appear, flowers bloom, fruit grow, and harvests mature. Through each day of our lives, whether in sickness or health, prosperity or poverty, joy or sorrow, you are in control. Help us to be patient when things go against us, thankful when things go well, and always confident that nothing could ever separate us from your love. For your unending faithfulness, we thank and praise you. To you be glory, now and forever. Amen.

Empowered 8 — Christ's Power in Salvation

Song Ideas

- The Lord Is My Salvation — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzZaeKr3PD4>
- In Christ Alone — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIZGRydoUpQ>

Scripture Ideas

- Matthew 20:1-16
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- John 3:16-21

Reading / Prayer

By true faith in Jesus Christ, I am righteous before God and heir to life everlasting. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments, of never having kept any of them, and of still being inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without any merit of my own, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is accept this gift of God with a believing heart.