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**Unified.
Empowered.
Missional.**

WEEK 6: ACTS 11:19-12:25

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what is happening in your own words.
2. What stood out to you as you read?
3. Did these verses raise any questions as you read?
4. What can we observe from this story about God the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
5. What can we observe from this story about people?
6. What can we learn from this story about who we should be as believers and who we should be as a church?
7. Why is this passage in this particular book of the Bible? What might the Bible lose if this passage was left out?
8. What is something you sense the Spirit leading you to do in obedience to this text?

GOING DEEPER:

This week in Acts, the Jews are becoming increasingly less tolerant of this new multi-ethnic Jesus movement and as tensions rise, persecution continues to increase. Shortly after the government's murder of his friend James, Peter finds himself in prison. While we aren't entirely sure what Herod's plans for Peter were, it's not a stretch to assume that Peter was about to suffer the same fate as James. Let's take some time outside of the book of Acts to gain a bigger picture of Peter's story and his devotion to Jesus in the midst of his suffering.

Let's start with John 18:12-27. Peter has been with Jesus since the beginning of His ministry as one of the disciples. In this section of Scripture, Jesus has just been arrested. In the midst of Peter's fear, how does he respond? Take note of how many times he denies, Christ.

Now, flip ahead and read John 21:4-25. In this section, Christ has already died and risen and is now spending some last precious moments with His disciples, preparing them for what is to come. Peter, who had previously denied Christ, is now being given an opportunity to proclaim his love for Him. Take note of how many times Christ asks Peter if he loves Him. Why do think Christ might have asked Peter about his love three times? What does Christ predict for Peter in v.18-19?

In Jesus' final moments Peter had stood around a fire and denied Him. But Jesus, in His tenderness and attention to detail, around another fire, publicly restores Peter. And then Jesus takes time to prepare Peter for the tribulation that will come from following Him.

Reread Acts 12:1-17. Take a moment to pause and imagine what Peter might have been feeling in his jail cell as he mourns James' death and remembers some of Christ's final words to him.

To what seems to be both Peter and the church's surprise, Peter is led by an angel of the Lord out of prison for a second time. And yet, he is no longer safe to remain with his friends. After letting them know he is free, he slips away in the night. However, Acts 12 would not be the final time Peter would face death. Peter would go on to live about three decades with the prediction of death hanging over him (2 Pet. 1:14) and would eventually be put to death by Nero.

Now, flip over to 1 Peter. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9, 3:13-14, and 4:12-16. Just as Christ encouraged Peter, now Peter is writing to encourage other believers in the face of persecution.

Jesus took a fearful fisherman and with compassion and love grew him into a bold and courageous leader of the church. Despite Peter's initial wavering in the midst of trouble, he would spend the rest of his life loving Jesus boldly and preparing others for the same tribulation Christ had prepared him for.

AN INVITATION:

Imagine Conference

Friday, November 13th and 14th with both in person and virtual options

As we've read throughout Acts, since the beginning of the Christian Church, there has been a commitment from believers to care for vulnerable people in our world. That is why for more than a decade, passionate followers of Jesus have gathered together through the Imagine Conference to collaborate on effective ways to serve Pittsburgh and the world through mentoring, refugee care, engaging in racial reconciliation efforts, seeking justice through combating human trafficking, embracing life, adoption and foster care, and supporting local and global missions. You won't want to miss out on learning from this year's keynote speakers, Will Ford and Matt Lockett, authors of *The Dream King*, who will be inspiring conference participants by sharing their remarkable story of racial reconciliation and missional engagement. We'll also hear from many different perspectives throughout the entire conference that will equip us to make a transformational difference with our lives in addressing some of the most significant challenges that our world is currently facing.

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.