

Signs and Wonders **Acts 5:12-16**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem the last week of His life, there was a collision of power. God's power was with Jesus. Political power was with Pilate. Religious power was with the Jewish leadership. Which power emerged triumphant? In a surprise move, Jesus won through surrender. Jesus voluntarily surrendered Himself to the powers that He would conquer. No one saw it coming. Victory through crucifixion. Life through death. Power in defeat.

Today we come to a section of Scripture in which we clearly see God's power displayed through ordinary people. This section refers to signs and wonders being done through the hands of the apostles. The important thing about a sign is not what it accomplishes but what it points to. A sign points to something.

Our study in Acts brings us to chapter five. If you are a guest today, we are going through a book of the Bible called Acts. This book records the Acts of the Apostles. It's a record of the First Christians in the early Church. At this point in time, Jesus has lived, died and risen.

V12 Many signs – not a few but many. Through the apostles. Many signs and wonders through the apostles.

These are miracles but they are miracles with meaning. These are not random miracles that God worked through the apostles because He felt like it. There was purpose to these miracles. This is perhaps most easily seen in the word sign. A sign points to something. These signs and wonders, these miracles are pointing to something huge:

The risen Lord Jesus is building His Church.

There's something fascinating about signs and wonder in Acts 5. We find that in Acts 4, the Church prayed for two things: Boldness to declare the message AND God's power to be released with healing, signs and wonders.

In Acts 4, the apostles were told not to teach in the name of Jesus. Also in Acts 4, they ask for boldness to teach in the name of Jesus. God answered their prayers and then some. God gave them boldness and signs and wonders.

How did they ever know how to pray for such power? Why would they even think of that?

In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised power. The early Church prayed for power. God released His power.

Jesus specifically promised that His power would be a God-given power enabling them to be His witnesses. Jesus did not promise them power to live a better life but to be witnesses. Jesus did not promise power to take their problems away but to be His witnesses. Jesus did not promise power so that they could have great faith but to be His witnesses.

The promise of power is given in Acts 1.

The prayer request for power is given in Acts 4.

The display of power in signs and wonders occurs in Acts 5 and beyond.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1) *For those of you who don't meet every week:* How will the story of Ananias and Sapphira from Acts 5:1-11 make a difference in your life?

2) What are you praying for that's big?

3) Pastor Karl mentioned that the Bible is not a self-help book. Rather, God has promised us His power. Can you think of any ways you might pursue a self-help approach to Christianity rather than an approach that seeks God's transformation in your life?

4) How has God changed your life? (Change as a result of God's power, not your effort)

5) It was also mentioned that Christianity is not individual-based faith but a community based faith. To be sure, every person comes to God as an individual but we have been called to community. Here's what we've seen in Acts:

*Jesus promised His power to a group.
A group prayed that God would release His power.
A group experienced God's power.*

Question: What are you doing to make the experience of community more meaningful to you?

6) Who are you praying for to become a Christian?

Family Discipleship:

(This is a time for parents to be intentional in their efforts to disciple their children.)

Read Acts 5:12-16 along with Acts 1:7-8 and Acts 2:41-42 as a family and discuss the questions below.

Where did the apostles get the power to perform miracles?

The apostles were ordinary people God chose to use. What happened according to Acts 5:14?

Do you think this is what they prayed for in Acts 2?

We are an ordinary family. Who can we pray for to know Jesus?

How can we tell people about Jesus with our words and actions?