

# Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends  
Next Steps: "Beyond the Ordinary", October 6, 2019

## The Big Idea

With God's power, even ordinary people can do extraordinary things. This is not a self-help slogan, as if God's power is some force in the air that can be wielded for our own gain. God is not a genie in a bottle granting wishes. No, God is up to something. He is full of purpose and power, unfolding his kingdom until the final victory. Through grace we are invited into that kingdom work, no matter how wise or gifted or wealthy or educated. In fact, it is precisely in our weaknesses that God shines most brightly. As Paul said, "Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong."

## Where we are in the Bible

Acts 4:13-20. In reading the book of Acts we must pay attention to three significant movements in the narrative: from Jerusalem to Rome, from Jew to Gentile, and from Peter to Paul. When we arrive at chapter 4, the focus is still on Peter and the clash between the Jewish authority and believers in Jesus. Earlier, Peter is walking into the temple and is confronted by a crippled beggar. Healing this man "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," the authorities become threatened. But instead of keeping quiet, Peter uses this moment as an opportunity to preach the Gospel. He and John are jailed for it, but this doesn't stop Peter to once again speak about Jesus to the council. His speech leaves the council amazed because "they were uneducated and ordinary men."

## Finding a bit of ourselves

- Here in the Scripture we see a supernatural miracle of God. Is there a time when you witnessed or experienced a miracle?
- Many people in more developed countries claim to not experience any miracles, while it seems as though miracles are more prevalent in under-developed countries. Have you ever wondered why you don't see the kind of miracles that are recorded in the Bible or in other places? Why do you think people in other places experience more miracles?
- Read Acts 3:1-10, the healing of the beggar. What's the significance of Peter declaring, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you"? Reflect or discuss what this means for God's people today.

## Where do we go from here?

- What are some spiritual activities (prayer, Bible study, evangelism, etc) that you find the most powerful? Do you make space in your life to engage those activities? What changes could you make to your spiritual practices to tap into God's power?
- Throughout the book of Acts and early church history, disciples of Jesus experienced hardship and even persecution. What are some of the "forces of opposition," spiritual or physical, that exist in your walk with Christ? Spend some time naming those strongholds and praying for Christ's victory over each one.
- Despite resistance, Peter and John could not help but to proclaim "what we have seen and heard." What are some of the things that you have "seen and heard" of God that you would claim as evidence of God's power? When's the last time you shared those things with someone?

## Prayer focus

Thanking God for His available power, invite the Holy Spirit to take ground in the following areas, adding your own specific examples:

- Your home and family
- Your relationships
- Your church family
- Your community

## Other scriptures to consider

John 11:38-53  
*Jesus' run-ins with Jewish leaders*

Acts 3:1-26  
*The beggar's healing and Peter's sermon*

1 Corinthians 1:26-31  
*"Boast in the Lord"*

2 Corinthians 12:1-10  
*Power made perfect in weakness*

