

# Exploring the fullness of God

## Week 4: The Sovereign God

### **WELCOME**

*Spend time relaxing and sharing together.*

Icebreaker. Imagine that someone you know has been imprisoned and is awaiting sentence for saying that Jesus is the only way to God. What would you do?

### **WORSHIP**

Acts describes how Jesus continued his ministry on earth through his church and the Holy Spirit after he had ascended into heaven. Give each person the opportunity to praise the Lord by sharing how they have grown in faith and been inspired by God's Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

### **WORD**

Read Acts 4.23-31

1. The disciples had just healed a crippled man in the name of Jesus. We see in this passage that, because of this miracle and Peter's address to the crowds, the number of Christians grew to five thousand, and Peter and John were imprisoned. Can you think of times in your life when boldness for the gospel and blessing in ministry have gone hand in hand with persecution?

## **Growth Group Notes**

### **Spring 2024**



2. Eva became a Christian in miraculous circumstances and saw many of her friends also come to faith at her baptism a few weeks later. However, when she was suddenly made redundant at work, she stopped coming to church, saying that she could no longer believe in a God who would allow this to happen. To what extent can you sympathise with Eva's predicament?
  
3. The believers began their prayer by recognising who God is. What aspects of God character do they praise and why?
  
4. How should beginning our prayers with the words 'Sovereign Lord' affect what we then ask God for?
  
5. Remembering God's faithfulness in the past inspires our faith. How is this true for the early Christians?
  
6. The early Christians quoted scripture in their prayer. Looking back to David's psalm, they understood that he was prophesying the execution of Jesus. How did this help them face persecution and how can it help us today?

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7. What is the disciples' main request in this passage and why is it surprising? How does it compare to what we would ask for in the same situation?
8. How do God's sovereign control of the world and our mandate to tell the world about our faith go hand in hand? (see Matthew 28:18-20).

## **WHAT NEXT?**

In the book of Acts there is a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit equipping the church to proclaim the message of Jesus, even in the face of severe persecution and suffering. Acts helps us to communicate the Christian faith in different settings. We need to learn from the early church how to be faithful to the gospel and yet adapt how we present it in a variety of contexts.

## **What can we do?**

Think of five friends who are not yet Christians and commit to introducing them to Jesus. Perhaps this means praying for them, inviting them for coffee or dinner, taking them along to a church service or Alpha course or giving them a book about your faith.

If God is our Sovereign Lord, he needs to be first in every part of our life. In his sermon, Andrew gave us the acronym, **God F.I.R.S.T** – Putting God first in our: Finances, Interests, Relationships, Schedules and Troubles. Consider taking time to reflect on each of these, one per day, over the next five days.