

# ACTS 12:1-16 “SQUEEZED”

Week 4

When your life is being squeezed  
Know that God is about to do something great

We learn a lot about ourselves when we are being squeezed. When we are in the vise, when the pressure is on, when we are between a rock and a hard place, we have all sorts of insider language to describe these times. It's the fiery furnace, the fiery trial, the storm, the flood. You know the descriptive list is long. We can put on a fancy Sunday face, sing our favorite songs, share Scriptures, and counsel others on what they should do in the troubling turbulence of life. But what's happening on the inside of our own lives? Today, many Christians want it easy. They quit, complain, or blame others for their situation if it's too hard. They stay stuck, bound by circumstances when they should move forward with God. What gets missed in that wrong response is the reality that God shapes our character and does His greatest work in the hard stuff and the headwinds. From the trouble, God gives you the testimony. No one ever got a testimony from smooth sailing. It takes trouble to give birth to God's power and to leave you with the exciting acclamation that "God did it!"

(5 min) OPENING PRAYER

As a Life Group, invite the Holy Spirit into your time. Ask God to strengthen you with the power of His Spirit. Identify the things you have allowed to hold you back from God's best. Choose God's perspective and follow Him even in the uncertainty.

(10-20 min) TIME TO CONSIDER

As you've had the opportunity to reflect on what God has spoken to you through this week's lesson, consider these questions as a group and discuss them.

1. Read through Acts 4:23-31. As a group, discuss how the early church responded to the cultural pressure around them. What do you learn from their example? What has held you back from responding the same way? What changes are you willing to make?
2. Following God means rising above the framework of being controlled by your circumstances. We sometimes allow circumstances to chain us down and hold us back instead of moving forward in God's power. This often means choosing to follow God when the way forward is unclear. The angel led Peter step by step, even in his uncertainty. Discuss this.

Sometimes the light that God shines in the darkness is only meant for you to see.

WEEKLY MEMORIZATION VERSES: PSALM 124:1-5 “If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,” Let Israel now say—<sup>2</sup>“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, When men rose up against us, <sup>3</sup>Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their wrath was kindled against us; <sup>4</sup>Then the waters would have overwhelmed us, The stream would have gone over our soul; <sup>5</sup>Then the swollen waters Would have gone over our soul.

(20 min) EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT TOGETHER: As a Life Group, take the next 15-20 minutes to pray and enter into a time of encountering the Holy Spirit. Remove distractions as best you can and start by asking, “Come, Holy Spirit, come.” Share the challenging situations that grip your life and encourage one another with Scriptures, words of wisdom, knowledge, and prophetic words as the Spirit gives them to you. Don’t feel pressured or forced to say something. Wait on the Lord. As He impresses something upon your heart, share it in love. Be careful not to use statements like, “The Lord told me to tell you” or “Thus says the Lord.” As you share what God has impressed on your heart, it will become evident if it was from God without those authoritative phrases. Also, if God gives someone a word for you, the Spirit within you will bear witness to it.

**You will either be a prisoner of your circumstances, or you’ll get up and start moving forward with God.**

(5 min) LIVE IT

Based on the study, be intentional, courageous, and filled with faith as you move forward with God. See your circumstances from His perspective and believe that He will work miracles as you walk by faith.