



## Open Gates

**Focus** Life is filled with both amazing and difficult moments. It's during the good times that God wants His followers to discover who Christ is so that during the difficult times we, like Peter, will say to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

**Fun** If you were a movie character, who would you be and why? Share with the group.

**Review** Key Scriptures: Matthew 16:15–20 and Acts 12:5–10

We can go from amazing to difficult rather quickly, but God gives us revelation of who He is to prepare us for difficult times and persecution. Satan tries to hold us back and discourage us, but God is able to loosen the chains that bind us and open the iron gates on our behalf.

- *We must have a revelation of who Christ is. (Matthew 16:15–20)*  
During Peter's highest point in life, he had a revelation of who Christ was. He boldly declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. If you're in a season of life where things are going well, or if you feel like things couldn't get any better, use this time as an opportunity to get a deeper revelation of who Christ is.
- *During the hard times lean on what you know to be true. (Acts 12:5–10)*  
Everyone experiences hard times. When you find yourself in a season of difficulty or persecution, it's not the time to answer the "hard questions." Instead, it's the time to declare who Christ is. Satan tries to put chains on us, but God is able to remove the chains and open any gate that He wants us to walk through. During difficult times we must declare that we will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. By doing this we welcome God to open any "gates" and help us overcome any obstacles we're facing.

**\*Group Dynamics Idea\*** Place two chairs in the middle of the room. For group members who are comfortable, have individuals or couples sit in the chairs to receive ministry. Have everyone gather around them and pray over them. Allow them to share specific needs. Do this for every individual or couple until all have received prayer.

- Discuss**
1. Pastor Brady referred to two types of seasons: difficult and amazing. Which season are you presently in? Share with the group.
  2. How has this season impacted your relationship with God and others? Explain.
  3. Tell about a time that was especially difficult for you, but during which you were able to discover a deeper revelation of who Christ is. Does that experience bring you hope when going through present challenges? Why or why not?
  4. Read Acts 12:5–10. Do you feel there are any areas of your life that the Enemy has tried to put chains on to hold you back? If so, what do you feel like God is saying to you regarding this situation?
  5. Pastor Brady shared we all have a God-given call that is wonderful and yet dangerous. Metaphorically, it's like the dangerous city on the other side of the gates that we must travel towards. Do you feel like you can identify with this statement? Why or why not? What do you feel like God is telling you in regards to your calling or the areas of your life He wants to give you victory in?

- Take Home** As we conclude, remember the following:
- Discover who Christ is during the easy times.
  - Declare who Christ is during the difficult times.
  - Allow God to open any gates that stand in the way of your calling.

**Pray** Pray that each person will have a greater revelation of who Christ is.

**\*New Leader Tip\*** Look for creative ways to get everyone involved in serving, both in big and small ways in your group.