

Acts 5.17-42

No Room on the Fence

10 Kids Experiment > 9 told Not React > Hands Up @ Longest Straw!

10th Kid HAND Up – Sees ALL Hands Down – Slowly Pulls Hand Down

Pressure > Xtians Small, Illegal, No Politicians, No Media, Outcasts

Church Grows > EMPOWERED in Worship / ENGAGED w/ WORLD

Balance: Church Sent into WORLD – Strengthened by WORSHIP

No Worship: Become Self-CENTERED / No Witness: Self-ABSORBED

1. The Folly of Opposing God

a. Fight for Followers Growth of Early Church > Shrank Ranks of Jews

v. 17 the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and *filled with jealousy*

WHY SOPHISTICATED Leaders Jealous of RAG-TAG GALILEANS?

COUNCIL > Well Educated, Properly Ordained, Government Approved

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4.13

Magnetic Attraction of Jesus – More POWERFUL than Yoke of Law

DAY of PENTECOST: about 3000 added to their number that day 2.41

many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand

Acts 4.4

more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women

Acts 5.14

b. Force > Religious Leaders attacked w POLITICAL & POLICE Power

Could NOT REFUTE the TRUTH and POWER of Apostle's MESSAGE

Responded with FORCE > 1st Threats, 2nd BEATINGS, 3rd DEATH

NAKED POWER is ONLY WEAPON of WORLD

v. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison

When they MYSTERIOUSLY GOT OUT of PRISON....

v. 40 they called in the apostles, they beat them

They were jealous of Jesus because it was his name, rather than theirs, that was proclaimed. They were also jealous of the apostles because they were preaching powerfully and doing miracles so people were following them. James Boice

c. Faulty Facts Sadducees say that there is *no resurrection*, and that there are *neither angels nor spirits...* Acts 23.8

Thus >> God is Weak Today \ God is Worthless on the Final Day

IS God Weak Today? > ANGELS God's Servants to HELP Children

v. 19 during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out
Word ANGEL occurs 21 X's in Acts > SUPPORT God's SERVANTS

IS God Worthless on Final Day? NO Resurrection > Gospel is HOAX

d. Finesse > Gamaliel, Pharisee, Member of Minority Party in Sanhedrin

v. 34 Pharisee in council named Gamaliel, a teacher of law held in honor

MOST RESPECTED Rabbi of his GENERATION

Mentor of SAUL of Tarsus / Praised for Wisdom, Restraint, Patience

TODAY > Nobel Peace Prize > Secretary-General United NATIONS

True > MORE Reasonable than Enraged SADDUCEES > NOT SEE...

1) Obvious > No Mention of Clear Truths about These Guys

Story began Ch 3 – 1st Interrogation after HEALING of Lame Man ...

ADMIT: For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it 4.16

'Hey, how did Lame Man get Healed & How did you guys GET OUT?!'

To ASK Question > Admission that their God is TRUE, POWERFUL

Gamaliel seems Sophisticated, OBJECTIVE > But is FOOLISH

They Put GUARD at Tomb of Jesus > He got out ALIVE

They Put Apostles of Jesus in Locked Prison > Got Out & PREACHED

2) Witness of Scriptures

Gamaliel “a teacher of law held in honor by all” v 34 > Search Scriptures!

Jesus declared both AUTHOR & SUBJECT of Scriptures: “These are my words... everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Luke 24.44

Prophecies in Hebrew Scriptures Fulfilled in Jesus > low 50 – high 500

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” 2 Corinth 1.20

3) Opportunity > Private Audience w/ Apostles of Jesus > Hear Them!

v. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Temple & Priesthood leads to Repentance & Forgiveness with God

Peter claims NOW way of Peace FOUND Now in God’s Leader & Savior

All that had been represented by the temple has now reached its final purpose and fulfillment in Christ.
Clinton Arnold

Lost Opp > Turned Discussion from Jesus to 2 Dead Insurrectionists

Neutrality about Jesus is NOT an OPTION > FOR or AGAINST Him

Jesus: “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.”
Luke 11.23

GAMALIEL calls it CAUTION > GOD calls it COWARDICE

GAMALIEL thought he was DELIBERATING > GOD sees his DENIAL

Sitting on FENCE is NOT Safe Place > Salvation: Clear, Bold Decision

e. Final Fears > Sanhedrin try Bailing Water OUT of a Sinking Ship!

Numbers DECREASING > Some of OWN LEADERS are DEFECTING

vs. 25,26 “Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.”

ANGELS (Which DON’T EXIST) Opened Prison to Release these Ignorant Preachers of RESURRECTION (That NEVER HAPPENED)

v. 24 captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to.

No Regard for Personal Safety > Liberated Fools Go Preach in Temple!

SANHEDRIN > Rulers of People, Now are in FEAR of the PEOPLE

PETER'S PROVOCATIVE Message to COUNCIL of ELDERS...

v. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

IF You had Holy Spirit > You'd Understand TRUTH in JESUS

DEAD COUNCIL > Defending OLD, PASSING TRADITIONS

DYNAMIC CHURCH > Declaring NEW, LIVING TRUTH

v. 33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

v. 28 High Priest: "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

Just Months BEFORE > chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd...to have Jesus executed...All the people answered, "*Let his blood be on us and on our children!*"

Matthew 27.20-25

Dare Not Speak His NAME 'this man's blood' > MAN they Feared

Few Years Later > Temple was TORN DOWN, Religion made RELIC

ONLY JESUS Saves > Stubborn Jews & Sinful Gentiles > Need Him

Either GUILTY of Blood of X OR find GRACE thru His BLOOD

2. The Freedom of Obeying God

a. Trust > Apostles should be Stressed (Not Rulers) but they're CALM

Night Before Cross > Jesus to 11 Faithful Apostles...a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.

John 16.2-4

4.19 *commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*

Command of Angel > Direct CONFLICT w/ Command of Authorities

v 20 Go & stand in temple & speak to the people all the words of this Life

TRUST > In GOD WHO HOLDS the OUTCOME

600 Yrs Before > 3 FAITHFUL Servants of GOD in BABYLON

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar...If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, *the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods...*"
Daniel 3.14-18

Know God's Power, Don't Always Know His Plan: Our Good, His Glory

KNOW Going to BE WITH HIM > Peaceful Sleep or Painful Suffering??

vs. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

b. Truth > SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS based on OBJECTIVE FACTS

1) Redeemer > Apostles NOT DEFEND Selves > DECLARE Savior

Purchase v. 30 Jesus...whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree

Position v. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior

Pardon v. 31 to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Proof v. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, v. 32 We are witnesses of these things

Power v. 32 the Holy Spirit, whom God has given

Purity v. 32 those who obey him

2) No Rivalry

No One or Nothing else can claim our Ultimate Allegiance

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed...Salvation is found in *no one else, for there is no other name*
Acts 4.10,12

If Peter Not so Pig-Headed > Safely Sleeping in OWN BEDS

But He Learned PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES of DENYING Jesus

Firmly, Tactfully Stated UNWAVERING ALLEGIANCE to Jesus

They called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God..." 4.18-20

SOME Time in PRISON made them LESS TACTFUL...

v. 29 Peter & other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

LEGITIMATE Christian CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE...

NOT SELFISH for GAIN or MORE COMFORT or LAWLESSNESS

ALL APOSTLES > v. 18 arrested the apostles & put them in public prison

Absolute Ban on Only Church v. 28 "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name... "

c. Teaching > Primary Task of Church > Make this Message KNOWN

Angels Not make LIFE EASIER – Find Parking Spot – Curb Appetites

Angels send into DANGER > MORE Safe IN PRISON!

v. 20 "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

God DELIVERS and the SENDS them BACK into FIRE

Message Big & Transforming > NOT SURE what to CALL IT YET!

But SURE that WHOLE CITY Needs to HEAR this FULL MESSAGE!

Many people who escape persecution keep their mouths closed afterwards, as if they had no further obligation to God...But the Lord sets his people free not so they can abandon the course they started, but rather so they can be more keen in the future. John Calvin

Jesus: "Go and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them...*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*" Matthew 28.19-20

v. 21 And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

LINE by LINE – Book by Book they TAUGHT the People God's Word

v. 25 "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people."

APOSTLES > Both CONSISTENT Lives AND a CLEAR MESSAGE

Today "I let my LIFE do the Talking" / Preach Gospel w/OUT Words

Ridiculous! Any News worth Knowing Needs Words to Communicate

Turn on TV News Turn Volume Down / Gussied Up People Moving Lips

Don't Need WORDS – They're Lives are Doing the Talking!

v. 28 "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching"

High Priest > CONFESS Powerlessness of MAN to STOP GOD!

They LIQUIDATED Jesus – LOCKED UP Apostles >> ALL IN VAIN!

Jerusalem FILLED with TEACHING > CITIZENS coming to CHRIST

Danger Loyalty to Politicians – Red or Blue – Want Votes Not Values

Apostles refused to Allow STATE to STEAL its God-given MISSION

v. 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

YOU THINK THIS SERMON IS LONG!! They NEVER STOPPED!!

DAY AFTER DAY > How Many days has it been since you TOLD SOMEONE about Jesus?
Yesterday? Day Before? Last Week? Last Year?

Are we MORE AFRAID OF PEOPLE than FOR PEOPLE?

Christianity is a religion with a message, a message so important that it simply must be shared to all who live on earth. Ajith Fernando

d. Transforming Picture of FEARLESS, Transformed Disciples

v. 40 they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus > lit. SKIN FLAYED
PEOPLE Often DIED from this TORTUOUS EXPERIENCE

What makes people REJOICE in SUFFERINGS?

The apostles were not so devoid of sense that they did not feel shame or that they had been wronged. They had not completely thrown out their nature. But when they reflected about the cause, joy took over. John Calvin

NOT EASY > HARD CHOICES > LIVES NO LESS COMPLICATED

Pressures / Problems / Temptations > Face Church of Jesus TODAY

vs. 38,39 if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them”

Jesus is ALIVE!! > ALIVE in HISTORY and ALIVE in their HEARTS *****

Acts 5:17-42 ¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.” ²¹ And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²² But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, ²³ “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside.” ²⁴ Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would

come to. ²⁵ And someone came and told them, “Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.” ²⁶ Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. ²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.” ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” ³³ When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴ But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵ And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶ For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷ After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸ So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice, ⁴⁰ and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Heavenly Father, It is an honor and a burden to stand on the shoulders of your faithful Apostles. We marvel at how “they...conquered...by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death” (Revelation 12.11). We are humbled by the privilege of making the Risen Jesus known to our generation. May your Angels guide us and may your Spirit empower us. Open the doors before us. May we be faithful to speak all the words of this new life as recorded by the Apostles.

Sovereign Lord, help us to navigate our relationships with governments and cultures. According to the wisdom you gave Peter, “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.” (1 Peter 2.16,17) Make us more afraid for them than of them. Deliver us from the cowardly compromise of Gamaliel. We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of your Son.

Pray for those you Love who Need Jesus

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God, our hearts are filled with praise for your mercy and grace – you were killed on the tree in our place! We bow before you now as the Exalted One, our Leader and Savior at the right hand of God. Grant us repentance and forgiveness all the days of our lives. Make us worthy of suffering and service. Fill us with your Spirit, make us your witnesses, glorify your Holy Name. Amen and amen.