

Acts 5:17-42 - “Opposition“
November 1, 2020 - Outline and Scripture

Outline

- 1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 5:17-42**
- 2. Review Acts 4:32–5:16 very briefly.**
- 3. Discuss the persecution and prison break in Acts 5:17-25.**
 - The motivation for the latest round of persecution? Jealousy, says 5:17
 - The apostles freed from prison by a miracle
 - Where do they go? Run away? No, back to the Temple for more ministry
 - Discovered by the Temple authorities
 - The apostles do not flee when released from prison, but instead they return to ministry. What provokes such commitment and trust? How can this commitment and trust be developed in us and in others?
- 4. Discuss the apostles’ examination by the Council in Acts 5:26-32.**
 - The apostles are so revered that the Temple guard must persuade, not arrest
 - The examination concerns the apostles’ non-compliance with previous edicts
 - Peter and the 12: again, we must obey God, not you!
 - Peter then proceeds to preach to them, a move guaranteed to rile the Council
 - How do the apostles justify their continued disobedience of the Council? When is it appropriate to obey the laws and rules made by humans? When is it appropriate to disobey? How do we make proper distinctions in these cases?
 - Many protest movements over the centuries have focused on “civil disobedience” as a way to bring change. What are some of these movements? What tactics make them stand out? What can we learn from them?
- 5. Discuss Gamaliel’s sage advice to his fellow members in Acts 5:33-42.**
 - The direction is trending badly until Gamaliel intervenes; he reminds the Council of pretenders who tried and failed to gather followings
 - In the present case, “keep away from these men and let them alone” (5:38a)
 - Why? If it’s not of God, it will crash and burn... but if it’s of God, then you’ll be opposing God Himself
 - Note that a thrashing is considered a lesser punishment (5:40)
 - Also note the apostles’ response: “counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name”; continue to minister “in the Temple and from house to house” (5:42)
 - What are circumstances in which we can apply Gamaliel’s advice today?
 - The apostles counted it an honor to suffer for Jesus. How is this approach to suffering radically different from much of today’s thinking?
 - Where in the world is it still an honor to suffer and to serve in Jesus’ name? How can we help those so honored?
- 6. Close in prayer.**

Scripture (English Standard Version)

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.