

FROM THE CELL TO THE CELEBRATION

Acts 5:12-42

THE EARLY CHURCH WAS INTENT ON GLORIFYING GOD OVER SELF

- “No one else dared join them, but the people spoke well of them. 14 Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—multitudes of both men and women.” (Acts 5:13-14)
- **God still does miracles today, but because we already have a full account of the works of Jesus and the Holy Spirit through the Apostles, miracles are no longer necessary to establish the authority and validity of the message of Christ.**
- “Then the high priest rose up. He and all who were with him, who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.” (Acts 5:17)
- **When lives are being changed by the preaching of the Truth of the Gospel, those who seek their own glory will be exposed.**

THE EARLY CHURCH WAS COMMITTED TO SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN SPIE OF PERSECUTION

- “Peter and the apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than people. 30 The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted this man to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.’” (Acts 5:29-32)
- **If Christians are to truly make a difference for the Lord and His Kingdom work then they must be willing to be persecuted by the prevailing culture.**
- Jesus - “You will be hated by everyone because of my name.” (Matthew 10:22a)
- **In a culture where so many people strive to be liked and accepted, Christians must stand out from the world and stand for the Truth of God’s Word.**

THE EARLY CHURCH OVERCAME PERSECUTION BECAUSE GOD WAS TRULY WITH THEM

- Gamaliel - “So in the present case, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of human origin, it will fail; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God.’ They were persuaded by him.

- **Like the early Church, a Church today that stays committed to the Truth of the Gospel, the Great Commission, and the Greatest Commandments, will be unstoppable!**
- “After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. 41 Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. 42 Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” (Acts 5:12-42)
- **When we are truly persecuted for Christ’s sake we should rejoice that we are being found faithful to the Lord.**
- Jesus - “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 11 You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

ICE-BREAKER: What is something encouraging that someone else has done for you?

START THINKING:

- What are some main themes/ideas in Acts 5:12-42?
- Why were some people avoiding joining the Apostles/the Church?
- Why were the Pharisees jealous of the Apostles?
- How did Gamaliel convince the Pharisees to not kill the Apostles?

DIGGING DEEPER:

- Why should we expect opposition and persecution when we are faithful witnesses for Christ?
- What are some ways Christians face persecution today for speaking Truth? In what ways have you experienced persecution?
- How can persecution for being faithful to Jesus bring joy?
- What does this passage of Scripture reveal about God’s sovereignty over the persecution of His people?
- How will this study impact your walk with the Lord?

FOCUS

- Who in your life needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? How has this message/text affected and/or inspired you to reach them?
- Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?