

Persecution, Deliverance and the Gospel

Acts 5:17-32 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."

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❖ Intro

- There are a lot of great truths and applications throughout these 15 verses
- **My Outline has 6 points**
 - 1) Persecution Continues
 - 2) God Delivers the Apostles
 - 3) God Sends Them Out to Preach
 - 4) God's Rescue Caused Confusion
 - 5) More Persecution Arises
 - 6) They Boldly Proclaim the Gospel
- **But the last point is what I want to really focus on...**
 - And the reason we want to look at that point so closely is because...
 - It is the meat of the story
 - When we begin to look at them boldly Proclaiming the gospel
 - And what they are saying...
 - We will see that everything else that happens is leading up to this...
 - And this is usual...
- **What they have to say about Jesus is the hinge on which the whole gate swings...**
 - It is why they are in the trouble they are in with the Jewish leaders...
 - And it is why they are sent out by God, regardless of the cost to be paid...
- **So make sure you pay close attention to what the apostles have to say about Jesus**

❖ Recap

- Barnabas
- Ananais and Saphira

- Apostles Continue to Proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus
- More than Ever Believers are Being Added
- God Continues to Work Miracles Through The Apostles
- Many are Being Healed

❖ 1) Persecution Continues

- **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.**

➤ The Leaders Arrest the Apostles

- What were the apostles doing?
 - They were teaching and preaching the people about Jesus...
 - And they were healing the people that had come for healing...
- **So, once again... they are arrested...**
 - If you remember, they went through this previously after they healed the lame man at the temple
- Now we see the motive behind their arrest...

➤ Because they were Filled with Jealousy

- They were very upset with the apostles...
- **But Luke describes their actions as jealousy**
 - And there are two ways to see their jealousy
 - **1) They were upset that their religious system was being attacked by these fishermen**
 - ◆ So they were filled with zeal for their religion and their God
 - ◆ Their system of worship had been set up years ago by Moses
 - ◆ And even before that Abraham worshipped this same God
 - ◆ So many of them saw this as an attack on their God...
 - **2) They greedily wanted the power the apostles had**
 - ◆ As religious leaders, they really just told people what to do
 - ◆ And here came these guys with power from some place
 - ◆ And they were jealous
 - ◆ They were filled with a greedy desire for what the apostles had
 - ◆ And did not think the apostles should have that power... but it should be theirs

❖ 2) God Delivers the Apostles

- **¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,**

➤ God Brings Them Out by Supernatural Means

- As God so often does... He delivers His children

➤ Lesson for us:

- **Do not be afraid to go and do as God has called you to go and do**
 - He will deliver you
 - He will go with you...
- **Now, let me say this...**
 - He allowed them to be arrested...
 - And He is going to allow them to be taken into custody again
- **All Things for His Glory**
 - And God's glory is invested in the Spreading of the Gospel
 - Let us live our lives as an offering of worship to our God
 - Let's long to be living sacrifices to God for His purposes

- God's glory is our Good...
- But... even if it were not for our good... God's Glory is more important
- **Eventually:**
 - God will deliver us out of this life and into eternal Life...
 - So, sometimes the deliverance is out of this world...
 - And I do not want us to miss that...
 - Because very soon... We will see that He allows Stephen to be stoned to death
 - ◆ For His own glory... And that is our first glimpse at Saul who becomes Paul
 - ◆ What an impact that stoning of Stephen likely had on Paul
- **Remember: We are not of this World...**
 - Our mind is not to be set on this world
 - We are just passing through
 - The Bible tells us that this is not our home
 - That we are looking forward to a city built by God
- **A City built by God...**
 - Forget Paris, or Dubai, or Tokyo...
 - How about a city built by God... That will be a wonderful place to live...
- **God sends an Angel..**
 - This time God delivers His servants back out into the world
 - To continue being used
 - **He sends His lock picking expert Angel to open the doors of the prison...**
 - And the Sadducees who are behind the arrest of the apostles do not even believe in angels..
 - ◆ Did not keep the angel from coming though
 - And the apostles are no longer in prison...

❖ 3) God Sends Them Out to Preach

- 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.
- **Again God Sends Them Out to Preach...**
 - So, no break from their calling... No downtime because of their imprisonment...
 - They are again sent out to speak
- **All the Words of Life:**
 - Words of Jesus... Words of the Gospel... All Synonymous
 - He tells them to go and Speak all the words of Life...
 - So... What they are going to do is to Continue bearing witness about the resurrection of Jesus
 - They will continue to tell the gospel
 - ◆ That man is in Sin, and dead in their sin...
 - ◆ And Jesus lived a perfect life, was crucified,
 - ◆ buried and then Resurrected by the power of God
 - ◆ And now He sits enthroned in Heaven reigning over all things
- **Words of Life...**
 - God knows the world is dead... they are walking in their sins...
 - They are not alive to God... They are not alive Spiritually...
 - They are dead...
 - ◆ We could spend a lot of time on this very thought...
 - ◆ So I am just going to share one verse that sums this up nicely...
- **Paul shares this truth to the Ephesians...**

- Ephesians 2:1-5 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
 - ◆ So there... you see the state of mankind from the eyes of God...
 - ◆ We were dead in sin... and we walked in deadness by carrying out our sinful desires...
 - ◆ This made us children of wrath...
 - ◆ God's wrath was upon us... and would be given to us as judgment if not for...
- ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—
 - ◆ **So here again... God has sent out His apostles because**
 - He was rich in mercy and love toward us...
 - And HE sends out the apostles to give grace to people by speaking Words of Life

➤ **They Obey God!**

- They did exactly what the messenger from God instructed them to do...
- They went back to the very place they had been arrested twice...
- **They do this, knowing what the consequences would be**
 - You may think... Well, God was doing such great things around them, it was easy
 - Well... They had been warned not to speak about Jesus...
 - By the very people who arrested Jesus... Had Jesus beaten
 - And then were responsible for His crucifixion...
- **They knew these temple leaders were not people to be messed with...**
 - They had been strictly warned... so I assume that came with some threats...
 - And we will see next week that they were **whipped** for speaking at the temple

➤ **Are We not Also Sent out to Speak?**

- I am unsure why it seems that so many of us do not feel a longing to tell others about Christ...
- **I understand the hesitation...**
 - We are fearful, and worried, and feel like we do not know enough
 - And we do not want to bother people or offend them...
 - We would rather just let them go to hell...
- **Although this sounds like sarcasm... Or me taking a shot at Christians who do not care to witness**
 - I say this with all sincerity
 - And I say this to myself when I allow those things to come into my thinking...
- **We must obey God's command to us to share the gospel**
 - We must!

❖ **4) God's Rescue Caused Confusion**

- 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."

➤ **Prison Was Securely Locked but Their Prisoners were no where to be found**

- **They were Perplexed...**
 - It Means: They had no idea what was going on...
 - The apostles were in the prison... and uhhhhh now they are not...
- **They Find the Apostles**
 - More confusion set in when they find the guys they arrested had returned to the scene of the crime...
- They are wondering... WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON AROUND HERE!

❖ 5) More Persecution Arises

- 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."
- **Brought in Again for Questioning and charging them**
 - This time... the leaders are a little bit afraid of the people...
 - Since so many people were following the apostles...
 - And they are afraid they would get stoned...
- **So they ask them to come along...**
 - They do not force them
- **Their Charge Against the apostles was...**
 - Do not teach in this name...
- **How do you respond in your workplace?**
 - Or When you are with friends...
 - Are you afraid to speak about Jesus?
- **Filled Jerusalem with the teaching of Jesus**
 - So... this little group of guys had filled the whole city of millions with the teachings of Jesus...
 - **What an Indictment... What a Charge...**
 - How awesome would it be if the city official came to us and said...
 - You guys need to chill out... You are filling the whole city of Covington with the Gospel
 - People are changing... It is hurting a lot of our businesses...
 - **How Great would that Be...?**
 - To see thousands given the Words of Life
 - And have their lives forever changed...
- **The Leaders thought the apostles were trying to blame Jesus' death on them**
 - **This question I do not understand...**
 - Who else was in charge?
 - Why are they worried about Jesus blood being upon them...
 - Were they not to blame...
 - **What else were they doing by sending Jesus out to be crucified...**
 - But, they do not seem to like the attention
 - Now that so many of the people have turned to Christ

❖ 6) They Boldly Proclaim the Gospel

- ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."
- **A) Obedience to God is of First Importance**
 - What man thinks does not matter... We MUST obey God rather than men

- **They knew they had a command given to them by God...**
 - And again they are reminding these leaders
 - ◆ that they are in opposition to the very God they claim to follow...
 - The apostles are saying... we are listening to God...
 - You on the other hand... are not...
- **Obeying God was and is more important than worrying about man...**
 - It is more important than our job, our school, our friends, or our family...
 - Why do we put other things first...? Because we are deceived like the Temple leaders

➤ **B) We see the Apostles proclaim who Jesus is:**

- **1) Risen after Crucifixion**
 - ◆ ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.
 - **The God of our Father Raised Jesus**
 - ◆ So they begin with the Resurrection... And that is the sticky point for these Leaders
 - Since they did not believe in Resurrection
 - ◆ **The God of our Fathers...**
 - So here is something really important...
 - Peter is identifying with them... He is telling them that **the God they claim to serve...**
 - The God of their Fathers... The God of Peter's Fathers...
 - The God of Jacob and Abraham and David...
 - This God... This God is the God responsible for the resurrection of Jesus
 - **Peter Reminds them of their Murder**
 - ◆ Whom you killed by hanging him on a tree
 - ◆ Never one to hold back... After proclaiming that God raised Jesus
 - ◆ He says... You are worried about His blood being upon you...
 - Because you are the ones who had Him killed...
 - ◆ So Peter reminds them of their sin... after reminding them that Jesus is Risen
 - **The Resurrection is Essential to the Gospel**
 - ◆ Without Jesus Resurrection... there is no gospel
 - ◆ There is no hope... there is no power over sin and death
 - ◆ There is no forgiveness of sins
 - **Peter continues to tell them about Jesus in vs 31**

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

- **2) Exalted Leader**
 - **Peter uses the same Word He used back in ch. 3:15**
 - ◆ Where He tells them they had killed the Author of Life...
 - ◆ The initiator... The Leader... The Prince...
 - **The Author of Hebrews Describes Jesus as such**
 - ◆ Hebrews 12:2 ...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - **Jesus is Exalted and Reigning...**
 - ◆ Philippians 2:9-11 ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven

and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- **Jesus is King of the Universe...**
 - ◆ And the disciples want the Temple Leaders to know this...
- **2) Exalted Savior**
 - **The World is in the darkness of sin...**
 - ◆ Sin and rebellion against God had reigned within the World...
 - ◆ And Jesus came to save the World from their sins...
 - ◆ What the World didn't know is that they were dead,
 - ◆ and God's wrath was resting on them...
 - **So, Jesus came to Save the World...**
 - ◆ Jesus Said... **Luke 19:10 ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**
 - **The Word that Luke uses simply means Rescuer of those in danger...**
 - ◆ Jesus came to rescue
 - ◆ **1 Tim 1:15 ¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.**
- **3) Giver of Repentance to Israel**
 - **Peter is being specific here...**
 - ◆ He is telling the Leaders of Israel that Jesus gives repentance to Israel...
 - ◆ Jesus doesn't just give it to Israel, but we know, to all nations...
 - **Here... Peter is still offering these leaders an invitation to come to Jesus...**
 - **The tricky thing about Repentance...**
 - ◆ Is that the prideful in heart do not see their need of repentance...
 - ◆ These leaders saw nothing wrong with their lives... they thought they knew God
 - ◆ They thought they were righteous and good...
 - **Until a person sees their sin, and need of Repenting... there is no hope in their being saved**
 - **Also we see here that Jesus is the giver of Repentance...**
 - ◆ It is not something that man does on their own...
 - ◆ **Acts 11:18 to the Gentiles also God granted repentance that leads to life**
 - ◆ **2 Tim 2:25 God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth**
 - **So What then?**
 - ◆ Pray for God to grant you repentance... To give you the ability through the Holy Spirit
 - To repent of your sins... to see your sins, and to turn from them...
- **4) Granter of Forgiveness**
 - **God is willing to formally release man from their sin...**
 - ◆ To wipe away their debt
 - ◆ To pardon their iniquity
 - ◆ To remove their sin from them..
 - **Paul quoting psalm 32**
 - ◆ **Romans 4:7-8 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."**
 - **Again Paul says:**

- ◆ Ephesians 1:7-8 ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

➤ **C) Man and God are Sent to Witness**

- ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit,
- **The Holy Spirit had come in great power...**
 - ◆ And God had come to live inside His people...
- **And throughout Jerusalem...**
 - ◆ Men had been witnessing with Words and Power granted to them by God's Holy Spirit
 - ◆ And the Holy Spirit had shown His power in great and mighty ways through the apostles...
- **God is doing everything so that people would believe the truth...**
 - ◆ He came to them as a man... Then rose... Then sent His Spirit to live in His people...

➤ **D) God is Given to Those Who Obey Him**

- **whom God has given to those who obey him."**
- **The Holy Spirit is given... (past tense)**
 - To all those who obey (continue to obey) him
- **What a great promise to Believers...**
 - What an invitation to these temple leaders...
 - You guys are jealous of our power right?
 - And you want to persecute us for it...
- **What if we offer you Repentance, forgiveness, and the power of the Holy Spirit to dwell in you..**
 - Same invitation is offered today

❖ **Invitation**