

## Four Principles for Early Church Living (These Verses and Principles are Very Important)

**Acts 5:33-42** <sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> 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; <sup>39</sup> 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, <sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. <sup>42</sup> And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

### ❖ Recap

- **We are coming right out of hearing Peter and the Apostles explaining the Gospel to the Council**
  - And they have exalted Jesus before their hearers...
  - They have told them the truth about God
  - And they have told the truth about the council's sinful unbelieving hearts
- **The Apostles:**
  - **Pointed out their sin in killing Jesus**
  - **They Reminded them that the God of their Fathers...**
    - Whom they claim to serve
    - Is the One who raised Jesus from the Dead
  - **They told these leaders that they must obey God rather than man**
    - Essentially letting them know that the leaders are not following God
    - And hidden in that point is the idea that the council is following a false God...
  - **They let the leaders know:**
    - Jesus is the Exalted Leader
    - Jesus is the Exalted Savior
    - Jesus is the Giver of Repentance
    - Jesus is the Giver of Forgiveness
  - **And once again, the apostles Remind them**
    - **We are witnesses of these things... We know them to be true**
      - ◆ We saw them with our eyes, heard them with our ears, and touched them with our hands
    - **And not only us, but God's Holy Spirit is a witness of these things...**
      - ◆ And the Spirit is demonstrating His power and witness
      - ◆ By healing and doing signs and wonders and miracles in the presence of all

### ❖ Title/Intro

- **4 Principles... or Truths for Early Church Living**
  - **Very Practical message today...**
    - Practical in the sense that you should be able to read these verses..
      - ◆ And use God's Word to see things you should put into practice.
  - **I could have said Christian Living but it would be lost on the modern day crowd**
    - **Today everyone is a Christian...**
      - ◆ It does not matter what version of the story of Jesus they believe in

- They can believe in works getting you to heaven
      - They can believe all sorts of things...
      - They can believe there is no cost to discipleship and be considered a Christian today
      - Or just have good set of morals and believe in God...
    - ◆ Yet, that is not what the Bible would describe as a born again believer in Jesus...
  - **So, I use the term: Early Church Living...**
    - Because we are looking at the book of Acts and how these early believers lived
    - And hopefully we are finding a model within it that is stirring up our hearts to action
    - Hopefully we are seeing things in these guys that we will want to mimic...
    - Not because it makes us more Holy...or more Commendable toward God...
    - Rather, because we are Holy, and we are already commended by God
  - **So Here are 4 Principles for Early Church Living**
    - 1) Expect The True Gospel To Instigate Anger
    - 2) Know That God Can Not Be Overthrown
    - 3) Rejoice When Counted Worthy to Suffer
    - 4) Do Not Neglect Your Daily Walk With God
- ❖ **1) Be Ready When The Gospel Causes People to be Angry**
- <sup>33</sup>When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.
  - **The Leaders were Infuriated**
    - This Word literally means... Sawn into
      - Their hearts were cut deeply... They were deeply upset... Exacerbated... Intensely Aggravated
    - **It is used in the Septuagint...** (The greek translation of the Old Testament)
      - In 1 Chron 20:3 when David set a conquered people to work cutting down trees and clearing land
    - **It is also used of the emotion built up by those listening to Stephen in Acts 7**
      - Right before they picked up rocks to throw at him...
      - Stephen had caused them to become enraged...
      - **And more appropriately we could say**
        - ◆ It was the True Gospel of Jesus that instigated their anger
  - **I can Remember getting like this one time**
    - I was in the fifth grade: And my little brother kinda got beat up...
    - He was in the fourth grade, and this kid who was supposed to be in the sixth grade
    - Was picking on him, shoved him down and punched him...
    - Just to be mean... Dean, never really bothered anyone, and was a little guy for his age
    - And his face was busted up a little from hitting the concrete..
    - **And I could kind of see it happening from my class room...**
      - They were outside on their way back from the gym
    - **And I went crazy... I ran out of class, and started yelling at the top of my lungs at this bully...**
      - I told him that if I could get my hands on him
        - ◆ I was gonna hurt him bad enough he would remember it for a long time
        - ◆ I was not quite that nice with my words
      - There were teachers everywhere by this time...
      - And I was having the hardest time getting to him...
        - ◆ But I meant every word I said...
      - And had he not apologized and my brother calmed me down...
        - ◆ I was gonna attempt to put him in a worse condition than my little brother

- **And even when I was thinking back to this experience**
  - I began to have those thoughts again...
  - And my anger began to rise, and my adrenaline began to get going...
  
- **These Jewish Religious Leaders were very Upset**
  - **They were so upset that they were ready to kill the apostles...**
    - That is mass murder...
    - Because there were 12 of them... And they were ready to get rid of all of them
  - **There is nothing new under the sun...**
    - This murderous hatred for Christians has been going on ever since...
    - And millions of Christians have been killed, are being killed and will be killed for the gospel
  - **The Scriptures teach that God has a certain number who will be killed for the gospel**
    - Revelation 6:9-11 <sup>9</sup> When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. <sup>10</sup> They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" <sup>11</sup> Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.
    - And after that, He will tolerate it no longer
    - And He will judge those that have spilled the blood of His precious Children
  
- **Unbelievers can become quite upset when Believers give them the Gospel**
  - When a born again believer tells someone that they are sinful
  - And it is their sin that is responsible for the death of Jesus
  - And there Goodness... their deeds, who they are as a person
    - Is not good enough for God...
  - At times people can become quite offended
  
- **The Scriptures tell us that the Gospel will be offensive to many**
  - Let Me Give you a few verses that Highlight this Truth:
  - **The apostle Paul, quoting from Isaiah 28:26 writes:**
    - Romans 9:33 "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."
  - **Again Paul writes:**
    - 1 Corinthians 1:18-19 <sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."
  - **And 3 verses later:**
    - 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
  
- **Watch the News**
  - See how mad someone gets when a person takes a stand on the Fact that Jesus is the only Way
  - People get really offended...
  - And I guess it should be expected...
    - We should not think people would just roll over and say nothing...
  - **Look at the Jewish Leaders...**
    - In their minds the apostles had treaded their "god" under their feet...
  
- **So, Why is it that the Gospel causes so many people to be offended?**
  - **Their Religious system is being attacked...**

- Everyone has some sort of religious system
- Being religious is not necessarily a good thing...
- Especially if your religion is wrong...
- And all except one is wrong... Cause they all disagree, right?
- Only one of these can be the right way
- **In the same way that the Jewish leaders saw their religious belief system being attacked**
  - The Gospel was destroying what they held so closely to
  - What they had believed in for so long...
- **And this applies to anyone...**
  - Even for an atheist... because He has a belief system...
  - His just has no room for God...
- **The Gospel:**
  - Strips Man of their Goodness...
  - It strips a man's self Righteousness
  - It takes away his pride
  - And leaves nothing behind but Dependence on a Merciful and Loving God
  - And this is very hard on people who trust in their own selves...
- **Sometimes people think they believe in the Jesus of the Bible...**
  - There are as many false Gospels using Jesus name
    - As there are totally different religions based off of human personalities
  - And when you challenge that false belief system... they too are very offended
- **This Brings us to Another Interesting Note: When the Gospel is not Offensive:**
  - It is for one of two reasons:
    - **1) Because God is saving them**
      - 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
    - **2) Because the Gospel is watered down**
      - Which means, it is not the true gospel... but it look really close...
      - There are millions who flock to watered down gospels...
      - A gospel that does not call for a person to die to themselves...
      - A gospel that lets them continue on in sin so grace will abound...
      - A gospel that does not dig deep into the word of God for its sustenance
      - A gospel filled with how to be successful in this life... to be free from stress and sorrow
- **Be Careful that You have not fallen under the sway of a Modern False Gospel...**
  - That claims to follow the same Jesus, and looks extremely close
  - But the truth is that:
    - **2 Timothy 4:3-4** <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.
  - **Therefore:**
    - Know the Gospel > Share the Gospel > Be Prepared for People's Reaction
- **So, here we see the Gospel offended these guys so much:**
  - They were ready to kill the apostles...
  - But the Disciples were not worried, because they knew Something Very Important...

## ❖ 2) Know That God Can Not Be Overthrown

- <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> And he said to them,

“Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> 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; <sup>39</sup> 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,

➤ **Can We Rejoice in the Wise Counsel of Gamaliel this Morning?**

- **I do not know if He ever becomes a believer... We would like to think he did...**
  - But at this point... He is part of the big council that arrested Jesus
  - I want to say more about him but do not have time...
- **Gamaliel was a very well respected man...**
  - And He is written of several times in Rabbinic Literature
  - This was Gamaliel I
  - His son and grandson are also mentioned...
- **He had great influence of the council because He was respected not only by other leaders...**
  - But also by the people...
- **He was also Paul’s Teacher, His mentor**
  - We see in Acts 22 where Paul says he was taught at Gamaliel’s feet

➤ **He Mentions some other movements that sprung up**

- I would also like to spend a little more time here...
  - ◆ But maybe you can do a little research on your own here
- **Josephus – the Jewish Historian mention many of those rebellion that rose up**
  - Theudus: We are unsure of who this guy actually was...
  - Judas and his uprising is well documented
- **So Gamaliel makes not that these guys all rose up, but then they were dispersed...**
  - So He gives advice to leave these guys alone...
  - And offers up a great Word of Wisdom we should rejoice in:

➤ **God Can Not Be Overthrown: Can we Rejoice in that Truth?**

- <sup>39</sup> but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!”
- **It should have been obvious** to all that God was behind this Movement of Jesus
  - Signs, wonders, miracles, Peoples lives being changed by the gospel
- **God’s Counsel Shall Stand**
  - **Isaiah 46:9-11** remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ <sup>11</sup> calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.
  - **God says of Himself:**
    - ◆ There is no one else like Him...
    - ◆ He declares what will happen before it happens
    - ◆ He accomplishes all His purposes
    - ◆ If He speaks... He will make it come to pass
    - ◆ If He purposes it... He will do it
- **God is Wiser than Man**
  - **Proverbs 21:30** No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the Lord.

- **God's Ways are Higher than Man's**
  - Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts
- **The Ancient Babylonian King Understood this Well...**
  - After God caused him to roam the fields with wild animals for 7 years
  - King Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and wrote this about God
  - Daniel 4:34-35 ...for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; <sup>35</sup> all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"
    - ◆ This great Earthly King, who had the world's greatest empire at the time
    - ◆ Realized he is nothing compared to God
- **Even the Death of God's Own Son Was Planned**
  - Acts 2:23 <sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,
- **Planned Before the Earth was Made**
  - Revelation 13:8 everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.
    - ◆ The book of the Lamb that was slain was written before the foundation of the world

#### ➤ **God Cannot Be Overthrown**

- Therefore: You can be like the apostles:
- Obey God over Man > Do Not Be Afraid of Man > Trust God to Do as He Tells You to Do > Trust in God to Fulfill His Promises >
- **Following God... sometimes leads to your suffering**
  - You may suffer physically, financially, or emotionally, or mentally...
  - Learn what the apostles learned:

#### ❖ **3) Rejoice When Counted Worthy to Suffer**

- <sup>40</sup>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. <sup>41</sup>Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

#### ➤ **The Apostles were Rewarded:**

- They were Rewarded for Healing that lame Man in Acts 3
- They were rewarded for sharing the gospel of Jesus with the leaders in ch 4
- They were rewarded for healing countless men and women being brought to them
- They were rewarded for telling the leaders about their sin, and Jesus again
- They were rewarded for living and thinking it wiser to listen to God than man...

#### ➤ **Their Reward was a Beating...**

- **So, the Council sort of listened to Gamaliel's advice...**
  - They did not kill the apostles...
  - But they still beat them...
  - They are still seen as trying to hinder the work and moving of God
- **Beat them:** This was a flogging...
  - The instrument of their flogging was likely a whip of some sort...
    - ◆ Probably with three straps of leather attached to it...
  - And the men were made to kneel down without a shirt on
    - ◆ And they were to be beaten 39 times across the chest and back
    - ◆ 2 across the back to every one across the chest

- **This was quite a beating...**
  - ◆ One they knew was a likely possibility when they disobeyed the council
  - ◆ One that could have killed them

➤ **The Response of the Apostles:**

▪ **Rejoicing:**

- It means they were filled with joy...
- They were happy...
- They felt a joyous emotion

▪ **They remembered what Jesus said about persecution:**

- **Matthew 5:11-12** "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

▪ **Peter would later write about it in his letter to Christian exiles scattered about**

- **1 Peter 2:20-21** But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

➤ **Why did they rejoice?**

- They were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

▪ **For the name of Jesus ...**

- Jesus was all that was important to them.
- They knew Him...
  - ◆ They knew Him as a Perfect Sinless Man
  - ◆ They knew Him as crucified Lamb
  - ◆ They knew Him as Risen Savior
  - ◆ They knew Him as Risen and Exalted King

▪ **Honored by being Dishonored**

- This is what is known as an **oxymoron**
  - ◆ That is when two ideas that contradict each other are brought together...
  - ◆ Their dishonor should have brought them shame...
  - ◆ Rather, they were honored...

- The Disciples found great rejoicing that God would allow them to suffer for his sake!

➤ **Wow... How far we have gotten from this these days...**

- Persecution comes in many different forms...
  - Maybe a person is beaten, spit upon, killed, mocked, shunned etc.
- Suffering Dishonor for the name:
  - This means: to be treated shamefully
    - ◆ To be given a lack of respect...

➤ **Therefore: Let us be ready for it, Prepared for it...**

- **Let's make a stand for the gospel...**
- **And if we are shamed for it, however that looks...**
- **Go home and thank God everyday when someone thinks you odd or crazy or too religious**

❖ **4) Do Not Neglect Your Daily Walk With God**

- <sup>42</sup> **And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.**
- No Matter how close you are walking now
- No Matter how far away you are now
- No Matter if you are considered a leader in the church



- No Matter if you are considered an unknown follower in the church
- **They Did Not Cease**
  - Meaning they continued consistently
  - They did not stop...
  - Let's look at the ways they did not cease
- **1) Every Day**
  - They were consistent daily...
  - So, this just reiterates the idea of continuing...
  - Not a day went by that they were not involved with the Work of Jesus...
  - So, what were they doing daily
- **2) Teaching and Preaching the Christ is Jesus**
  - **Teaching...** Usually this is what was being done in the homes
    - **So there were those that were teaching..**
      - ◆ They were teaching about Jesus
      - ◆ How He was the Christ
      - ◆ And countless other teachings that brought together the whole Bible
      - ◆ So people would know God better
    - **Now, this meant there were others who were learning.**
      - ◆ So when you read this, you see both of them involved...
  - **Preaching – This is the public proclamation that Jesus is the Christ**
    - They would go to the temple to preach that Jesus was the Messiah
    - So, they were going back to the place they were arrested twice, and taken into custody once
    - After being beaten.
    - Nothing hindered these guys from carrying on the work
- **What We see Here is a relentless Pursuit of God and Men**
  - They continued to teach and learn and grow in their knowledge of God
  - They continued to seek the lost men of the world so they would come to know Jesus
  - They Learned from Jesus
    - **Mark tells us that Jesus would go out before daylight and seek His Father daily**
- **This is a picture of the early church disciples...**
  - And this should be a picture of us!
- **They were like the Psalmist**
  - **Psalm 88:9 Every day I call upon you, O Lord; I spread out my hands to you.**
  - **Psalm 145: Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. <sup>3</sup> Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.**
- **Application:**
  - **1) Our Walk with God should be daily...**
    - Every day...
    - We should be seeking to know Him better everyday.
    - We have the apostles teaching in written form to dig through every single day...
    - What a blessing
  - **2) And we should be involved with the reaching of the lost daily as well.**
    - There are a million ways to be involved with this.
    - At our jobs, schools, with friends and family
    - We should be cultivating relationships
      - ◆ Praying for these people
      - ◆ And asking God to help you in sharing the gospel with them
  - **If this does not define who you are to some extent**



- You do not look like a Christian from the early church.
- You would be a strange person to them.
- **They would wonder...**
  - ◆ **So, you submit to Jesus, but you do your own thing...**
    - You look after yourself
    - You spend your days being entertained
    - Or you spend your life working for money
    - And pay no mind to the mission around you
    - You are afraid of shame... of dishonor for the name of Jesus?
- **I think they would say of many of us...**
  - I think you got the wrong church...
  - I think you have joined yourself to the wrong group...

#### ❖ Invitation

- **If you are a true believer this morning...**
  - Some of this stings... it hits you hard...
  - And you know you should focus your life more on the things of God
  - And this is not so you can earn favor
    - Jesus already earned you favor with God
  - This is because you know of His great love toward You
  - And you long to offer yourself to Him in service
- **If you are an unbeliever this morning**
  - This sounds foolish to you
  - Or God has spoken to you heart with His Spirit
    - Is convicting you of your sins
    - And you feel a need to turn from them and submit to Him