

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 7TH-8TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

OPPOSITION (ACTS 5:17-26) MORE OPPOSITION

Part of the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees show up and try again to prohibit the disciples from teaching about Jesus. This time, Luke mentions they are "filled with jealousy."

- Jealousy is fear of losing something to a rival. **If we are Kingdom-minded, we should care about God's glory, not ours.**

HELD IN JAIL, SORT OF

This is the first of three jail miracles in Acts. The Sadducees threw the disciples in jail, but "an angel of the Lord opened the doors...during the night" and told them to "stand in the temple, and **tell the people about this life.**"

- "Life" is a synonym for Jesus used dozens of times in the NT.

"WE FOUND THE JAIL SECURELY LOCKED"

Luke tells us that the guards never left their posts. This was a pretty big miracle that got the attention of and "baffled" the Sanhedrin.

- Psalm 55 talks about God confusing the enemies of righteous people. **Faith in Jesus and His abilities confuses those who have no desire to submit to truth.**

MIRACULOUSLY BACK AT THE TEMPLE TEACHING

Christianity was growing and becoming so popular the temple police "brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them."

- God doesn't always promise physical protection, but **if we will trust Him, He will work through us as He sees best.**

GOD FIRST (ACTS 5:27-32)

"YOU... FILLED JERUSALEM WITH YOUR TEACHING"

Again, the disciples stand in front of the Sanhedrin. They were angry because they had ordered them not to teach about Jesus or to "make [them] guilty of this [Jesus'] blood."

- To be saved and live in truth we must admit **Jesus is in control and we're guilty of the evil that nailed Him to the cross.**

OUR SELFISHNESS HAS A PRICE

Just a month or so before this event, the Sanhedrin had told Pilate to let "His blood be on us and our children!" as they screamed for Jesus to be crucified.

- **There are dire consequences to self-centeredness and the refusal to submit to God. Arrogance always leads to chaos.**

"WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN PEOPLE"

Before Peter goes into a brief explanation of the gospel to the Sanhedrin, he respectfully but firmly tells the council that Christians "**must obey God rather than people.**"

- Christians are to respect all people and be good citizens, but **we cannot compromise the tenets of our faith for any reason.**

NO DEFENSE, JUST A WITNESS

The apostles didn't fight fire with fire because **we're not to "repay anyone evil for evil" but to "give careful thought to what is honorable"** (Romans 12:17).

- True Christians aren't violent resisters but **witnesses of the truth, salvation, and Spirit offered "to those who obey Him."**

UNABLE TO OVERTHROW (ACTS 5:33-42)

A RESPECTED TEACHER OF THE LAW

The Sanhedrin grew "enraged" and "wanted to kill" the apostles, but one Pharisee "ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while."

- Self-centeredness lets opposition, even if it is gentle, get the best of us. But **humility and a desire to honor God will allow us to overcome irrational anger.**

WHAT LITTLE WE KNOW ABOUT GAMALIEL

Gamaliel was a highly respected rabbi and scholar in the first century. He is best known for his famous pupil Saul who became Paul.

- Though we don't know if Gamaliel became a Christian, Josephus and the Talmud both mention that he and his family were tremendously wise and honored the law.

THE TRUTH ALWAYS SURFACES

Gamaliel advises the council to be cautious about how they handle the Christians. He also mentions several rebels who died and how their movements "scattered" over time.

- Gamaliel was wise enough to **be patient and trust in God because what is true will eventually prevail.**

WE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM THIS PHARISEE

In the face of friction and anger, Gamaliel is **calm** and **logical**. This is a subtle reminder to us that we are to be **sober and controlled when making decisions.**

- We must also leave the fate of those who oppose the truth in God's hands. **Justice ultimately belongs to Him.**

THE WAYS OF MAN ALWAYS END IN RUIN

One of the Bible's biggest truths comes from a Pharisee. Gamaliel said, "**if this plan or work is of human origin, it will fail, but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them.**"

- Any accomplishment is by God's grace. **Without leaning on Jesus, everything we put our hands on will fall short.**

FIGHTING GOD

Not only will our work fall short, but when we refuse to trust Jesus for provision and direction, we will also find ourselves "fighting against God."

- Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, "Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters."

ON THE OTHER HAND...

If we will submit to Jesus and **let Him fight on our behalf**, we will not be "overthrown."

- This doesn't mean we won't struggle or have opposition, but **if we trust in and live in relationship with Jesus through prayer, the Word, and obedience, we will not be overcome by evil and chaos.**

"WORTHY TO BE TREATED SHAMEFULLY"

Though the apostles were set free, they were still "flogged" and ordered to not "speak in the name of Jesus." The apostles "rejoic[ed]" that they suffered for the name of Jesus.

- Suffering for Jesus helps us understand Him more, identifies us with Him, and brings us closer to Him (Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13).

THE WAR AGAINST SELF-CENTEREDNESS

- If we focus on ourselves more than Jesus and others, we will drift into envy, jealousy, confusion, and anger, and our lives will not be what God intends for them to be.
- Though we have a spiritual adversary, **Satan will most often use selfishness to lead us into sin and destruction.**

PLACING JESUS ABOVE ALL THINGS

- Though difficult, **we must choose to think less about ourselves and intentionally place Jesus at the center of our lives.**
- Following Jesus will lead to opposition from certain people. We are to be kind and respectful, but **we cannot compromise the truth for the sake of acceptance.**

THE BENEFITS OF SEEKING JESUS

- When we submit to Jesus, we are saved. If we will put **effort** into our relationship with Him, we will produce the **fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5) that **practically benefits us daily.**
- If we will **pray, read, and let God lead and fight on our behalf, we will live in His will and experience victorious lives** (1 John 5:4).

JOY EVEN IN THE HARDEST TIMES

- **True Christianity is difficult and will garner some level of suffering.** Ironically, this should be an honor because it brings us closer to Him and affirms our identity.
- **Contentment and fulfillment are available even in the hardest times, but only through knowing and living in our true identity.**