

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 8TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

### IMPRISONED (ACTS 5:17-21A) " FILLED WITH JEALOUSY "

The apostles gathered in Solomon's Colonnade though they were instructed by the Sanhedrin not to teach in the name of Jesus (4:18).

- Though they continued to preach the gospel, Luke tells us that the apostles were **arrested again and placed in a public jail** because **the religious leaders were jealous of their good works and popularity with the people.**

### " AN ANGEL OF THE LORD OPENED THE DOORS "

In Mark, there was a man who asked Jesus to help him in his unbelief (Mark 9:24). Here the apostles are **set free from a public jail by an angel** though the arresting party, the Sadducees, did not believe in angels.

- **God is willing to help us overcome our unbelief** by placing truth right in front of us, **but it is our choice to believe or not.**

### SET FREE FOR A PURPOSE

The apostles were set free for a purpose as the angel instructed them to **"Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life."**

- The offer of salvation through Jesus Christ that sets us free from death and sin is also for a purpose outside of just our freedom: **we are to tell others all about this new life.**

### " HEARING THIS ... "

The apostles prayed for boldness in Acts 4:29, and **their display of obedience shows that boldness was given to them.**

- They had been imprisoned and threatened, and they understood the risk of being arrested again if they taught in the name of Jesus (4:18). Yet, **when the angel instructed them, they obeyed.**

### OBEYING GOD (ACTS 5:21B-32)

#### " WONDERING WHAT WOULD COME OF THIS "

The servants of the Sanhedrin were ordered to retrieve the apostles from jail and bring them before the council for their disobedience.

- When the servants got to the jail, they found that the apostles had been **miraculously freed** (v. 23). The repeated evidence of supernatural power at work **left the religious leaders baffled and curious.**

### " BROUGHT THEM IN WITHOUT FORCE "

It was reported that the apostles were in the temple teaching the people, so the commander arrested them **"without force."**

- The apostles allowed themselves to be arrested. Jesus **prepared them** for this to happen (Mt. 24:9). He **empowered them** with the Holy Spirit and **gave them confidence** that it was His will for them to be freed again.

### " AFRAID THE PEOPLE MIGHT STONE THEM "

The apostles giving themselves up freely worked out for commander as well, since he was afraid of being stoned to death by the crowds for arresting them by force.

- Verse 26 shows the contrast between the **religious leaders' rejection** and the **people's reception** of the early Church.

### " HAD THEM STAND BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN "

The apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest essentially asked, **"Didn't we order you not to teach in His name? Yet now your teachings have filled Jerusalem."**

- The high priest's accusation is **a wonderful testimony to the effectiveness of the apostle's work** through the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, as it had now "filled Jerusalem."

### WE ARE ALL SINNERS (ROMANS 3:23-24)

The high priest said to the apostles, **"you...are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood. "**

- No one "makes us guilty." We already stand condemned, but Jesus' blood is able to free us from that guilt. However, when **we reject the only name that saves, we reject the freedom the cross offers** and stay condemned and deserving of punishment (John 3:18).

### FEAR OF MAN WILL RENDER US INEFFECTIVE

Luke is contrasting the boldness of the apostles as they sought to **"obey God rather than people"** with how the religious leaders feared people rather than God.

- When we are **secure with who we are in Christ**, we find ourselves freed up to obey God without being paralyzed by fear of what others think about us.

### ALL AUTHORITY COMES FROM GOD

The NT teaches that we are to submit to governing authorities that have been placed over us by God (Romans 13:1-7). However, **submission to human authority is never supposed to override submission to God.**

- We are to **pray for, show respect to, and submit to the authority placed over us**, unless we are forced into behavior that conflicts with God's will.

### " THE GOD OF OUR ANCESTORS ... "

The apostles' reaction to the Sanhedrin was not pleading their defense or asking for mercy. Instead, **Peter took the opportunity to share the gospel.**

- The foundation of our faith is this: **Our guilt** ("Jesus, whom you murdered"), **Jesus' sacrifice** ("hanging... on a tree"), **His resurrection** ("exalted to His right hand"), and **our responsibility to respond** ("to give repentance and forgiveness").

### COUNTED WORTHY (ACTS 5:33-42)

#### THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLES IS SET IN MOTION

The hardened hearts of the members of the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:7) were not softened by the gospel message presented to them, as Luke records, **"When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them."**

- The religious leaders sought to silence the apostles by imprisonment, but when that failed, they made it clear that they wanted to kill them.

### " A PHARISEE NAMED GAMALIEL "

Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel, who was the founder of one of the dominant schools of thought under Judaism.

- His plea with the Sanhedrin was to wait and see. He used the examples of two individual leaders who amassed followers making claims opposite to their views. In both cases, when the leader died, the followers scattered.

### NOT MISUNDERSTANDING GAMALIEL'S PLEA

Though Gamaliel was a good and respectable man, **it does not seem that his plea to the Sanhedrin was out of concern for the early followers or the preservation of truth.**

- There is wisdom and truth in his statement—if something is of human origin it will fail, but if it is of God, it cannot fail. By making this claim, **he is asking them to wait and see if they are of God.**

### NOT MISUNDERSTANDING THE PUNISHMENT

The disciples did not get off easy. The beating or flogging they received as punishment can be translated as skinned. The 39 lashes they received as a warning (2 Corinthians 11:24) literally stripped the skin off their backs.

- The religious leaders thought they could intimidate and discourage the apostles with a beating, **but they left rejoicing.**

### NOT STOPPING FOR A MOMENT

The disciples left the beating from the Sanhedrin **"rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name."**

- **They persevered, knowing the gospel they proclaimed was true** because they were "witnesses of these things," and the gift of the Holy Spirit was further confirmation.

### RESCUED APOSTLES

- We see in the text where God rescues the apostles, and there are many more instances recorded in Church history. However, there is a day where the apostles are not rescued and are martyred for their faith in Christ.
- Was God's will good only when His people were rescued? What about when they were delivered into their eternal reward?
- "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33)

### GREAT CONFIDENCE

- Though it may seem discouraging to know that we will face troubles in this life (John 16:33), we can have confidence that Christ has given everything needed to persevere.
- He has told us where to find peace in the midst of trouble—abiding in Him and Him in us!
- He has told us the outcome is victory ("I have overcome the world").

### EVERYTHING WE NEED

- We have the Word of God to read about ordinary individuals who lived extraordinary lives because of the Holy Spirit.
- We can draw inspiration from seeing their perseverance in the midst of persecution.
- The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift given to those who believe (v. 32) because the God of the universe is literally with us wherever we go.