

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 8TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

POWER (ACTS 15:17-24) JEALOUSY

After Peter, John, and the healed man were released, they shared their story and continued to share the gospel.

- It wasn't fear of wrong theology or a new social order that drove the religious leaders to arrest the apostles; it was jealousy.
- **Opposition to the gospel is rarely logical. Jealousy fed by pride will lead the opposition to act without thinking.**

PUBLIC JAIL

It seems that all of the apostles were arrested this time and taken to "public jail."

- The religious leaders wanted to publicly demonstrate their authority over the apostles.
- In their minds, they had eliminated Jesus a few months before, and now they would stop His followers from spreading the Word.

THE ANGEL

As the religious leaders acted publicly to assert their power and influence, an angel acted secretly to rescue the apostles.

- Under the direction of God and in His power, the angel opened the doors, brought them out, and gave them instructions.
- **When God delivers us, He always gives us a message to share. Where will we go with our story?**

THE TEMPLE

They were told to enter the temple and share "all about this life."

- "This life" is the life made possible by the saving work of Jesus, who is "the author of life."
- They didn't run away but actually went to the center of Israel's national and religious life. And they were prepared to share all day!

MEANWHILE, IN THE COURTROOM

The next morning, the Sanhedrin gathered to pass judgment on Jesus' followers.

- They found their efforts to silence the messengers of life had been divinely frustrated, since the jail was still locked and guarded.
- **They are starting to look like powerless religious professionals, standing in awe of ordinary men who were serving in the power of God.**

GUILT (ACTS 5:25-32)

TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

As they stood confused, someone came and told them that the apostles were back in the temple, teaching the people.

- **The apostles had remained true to their commitment to listen to God and go on teaching salvation, whatever the cost.**
- **In contrast, the religious leaders were desperately trying to protect themselves and their traditions, and they were willing to kill whoever stood in their way.**

FEAR

The apostles were escorted back to the courtroom by the commander and servants. It seems the commander and servants may have asked nicely because they were afraid the people might rise up against them.

- **When violence is your way, you expect violence from others and live in fear.**
- **When our message is salvation, our mission is obedience to God. Our response to opposition should surprise them!**

THE QUESTION

As they were brought before the Sanhedrin, the apostles were asked if they remembered they had been ordered to not teach in "this name."

- They completely ignored the divine release because the only explanation was the hand of God—and now, they wouldn't even say Jesus.
- **We are reminded that what God does and who Jesus is will challenge others to consider things they can't explain in their own power.**

THE CONFESSION

While conducting an indictment, the high priest confessed that Jerusalem was filled with the message of Christ and that if more people believe the message, they will also believe that the religious leaders killed the Messiah!

- Interesting that these same leaders who accused Jesus of telling the truth are now accusing the apostles of spreading the truth.

THE REPLY

Peter repeats his response from his earlier false arrest. He and every apostle would continue to obey God above people.

- Without denying the guilt of his accusers and every person in Israel, Peter shares a pathway to forgiveness, even for the murderers of the Messiah.
- The apostles and all Believers knew the truth. How would the accusers respond now?

VICTORY (ACTS 5:33-42)

ENRAGED AND MURDEROUS

The declaration that Jesus was alive and that they could be forgiven of their sins was too much for the religious leaders to process.

- They were too blinded by pride, jealousy, and power to weigh the evidence and make a proper response.
- They moved beyond amazement and confusion, lost control of their composure, and embraced a hatred that desired murder.

GAMALIEL

A well-respected Pharisee stood up and ordered a private meeting of the Sanhedrin.

- Seeing that executions might bring more chaos than they were currently dealing with, he offered some thoughtful advice.
- It's hard to tell whether Gamaliel was sensitive to the message of the apostles or if he was attempting to preserve the peace. Either way, God used him to protect the accused.

LEAVE THEM ALONE

After sharing stories of other men who had attracted followers and how they had fallen, he reasoned that fighting these Christ followers might not be worth it.

- He suggested the wait-and-see approach, because they wouldn't want to find themselves fighting against God.
- Even though he was wise, he still didn't believe in Christ, but he did believe the future would reveal the truth.

PERSUADED

His argument was received, and the Sanhedrin chose to release the prisoners.

- This was not a persuasion to believe the apostles but a suggestion that it might be better not to get into a battle they couldn't afford to lose.
- **Too many people today align with the Church so they won't have to battle the people. If we don't align with Christ, we will continue to battle with God, and we won't know what victory is until we stop fighting against Him.**

FLOGGED AND SILENCED

After the flogging and warning not to speak in the name of Jesus, the apostles actually left "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name."

- Persecution didn't stop them; it encouraged them.
- **When you are telling the truth of the gospel, conflict is a clear sign that you are sharing it with the very people who need to hear it.**

EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE

One group had just experienced a crushing defeat; the other endured persecution and grew in godliness as they submitted to God's will.

- Despite the opposition, the message continued to be taught and proclaimed in the temple and various homes throughout the area.
- **Is our daily witness drawing others in or pushing them away?**

VISIBLE

- Most people want to be seen.
- **What we want people to see may not be who we really are.**
- **Because we quickly judge others by what we see, we also create an image of who we want them to see. The problem is that this image can become the mask we see when we look at ourselves, and it may be a lie.**

CLARITY

- God is the only one who sees behind every mask.
- **The only one truly deceived is us because we can't see ourselves or others with clarity.**
- **Pride keeps the mask on. Humility and obedience allow God to remove the mask so we can see what He sees. We are not perfect, but we are forgiven. God sees the beauty of Christ when He looks at an authentic follower. Why do we still wear masks?**

BATTLE

- There is always a battle.
- **Family, work, culture, health, and other battles will not disappear simply because we close our eyes and want them to.**
- **As followers of Christ, those are the very places we go into battle. As we live in obedience to Him, we can rejoice that we already have victory and will see it in others. But if we are wearing masks, can they even hear us? The question is this: are we fighting for our lives or for theirs?**