

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit**  
**We Must Obey God Rather Than Men**  
**Acts 5:12-42**

Last time...Ananias and Sapphira

Idolatry (covetousness) crept into the early Church and the Lord summarily cleansed it

A holy God worthy of holy fear and holy living

After all, God holds our breath in His hand (Dan 5:23)!

1 John 3:1-3 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

This time...The Church disregards the

- the executive order to shut down operations
- over-the-top “social distancing” restrictions imposed by the ruling authorities
- attempts to silence the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is seen as a threat to public health by those authorities

The Church is

- open for business...the Father’s business of seeking and saving the lost
- not an organized protester of social activism marching on the halls of civil authority, but rather a living organism proclaiming life marching on the gates of hell

We are still in Acts 5

v12-14 many signs and wonders:

Their prayer of Ch 4:30 was answered

Evidence of Ch 4:33...their witness/testimony of Resurrection in the name of Jesus Christ

Who is in view?

- the apostles  
still the 11 that Jesus chose...  
Acts 1 (Matthias by lots) is before Acts 2 (baptism of Jesus)  
Jesus is going to choose a zealous Pharisee for the 12<sup>th</sup>

- the people/they (v12), them/the people (v13)  
the Church  
believers meeting in one accord in Solomon's Porch  
(just inside the Gate Beautiful, site of Acts 3)  
who highly esteemed the apostles  
120 (Acts 1) + 3000 (Acts 2) + 5000 (Acts 4)
- the rest (v13)  
non-Church of v11b  
dared not, were not bold enough to, be in one accord with or  
cleave to/"join" the Church
- believers (v14)  
more fruit of the witness of the Church  
unbelievers coming to faith in Jesus Christ, born again of the Spirit  
of God, given power to become children of God  
a multitude added to the Lord...Acts 2:47, Matt 16:18, Gal 3:28  
from Jerusalem...Acts 1:8  
(the cleansing of idolatry, v11, did not inhibit evangelism!)

v15-16 sick into the streets...cities round about:

People are hearing about what God is doing thru the apostles (those who had been with Jesus Christ of Nazareth)

In Jerusalem (v15), the sick are brought to the apostles, the people hoping for any touch by them (Peter in particular, the leader thus far);  
the touch point of faith for some?

In the cities around Jerusalem (v16), the physically and spiritually afflicted are brought into Jerusalem

And the Lord, thru His apostles, healed them all

Acts 1:1

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father

Acts 4:19-20 in action, not just in words

PTL!

NOT PP or PTA

The apostles are as popular with the common folk as Jesus was

v17-18 high priest...filled with indignation...common prison:

And the apostles were the target of religious indignation and persecution by the elites as was Jesus, as forewarned by Jesus – *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master* (Matt 10:25a)

The high priest...Annas (Ch 4:6)

all that were with him, the Sadducees...the liberal, rich elites

were filled with indignation...with all wonderful works of God blessing the people and people being reconciled to God,

- the children of God are filled with the Holy Spirit
- the children of the devil are filled with indignation – jealousy, envy, malicious anger

laid their hands on...arrested, took into custody, stopped their ministry

the apostles...all of them, not just Peter and John like last time

common prison...city jail along with other common criminals

v19-21a But the angel...opened...brought...said:

The rich liberal elites have locked up the apostles, the voices of the Lord Jesus Christ

But...But God

Wicked men cannot thwart the plan of God

the angel of the Lord...a ministering spirit, sent to minister to them who are the heirs of salvation (Heb 1:14)

by night...the devil does not rule the darkness, the Living God is the Lord of all

Ps 139:12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*

The angel's mission from God:

1. opened the prison doors...doesn't need the keys
2. led the apostles out of prison...a Divinely orchestrated jail break  
2 Tim 2:9b the Word of God is not bound

3. said...instructions for the apostles from the Throne Room of God

a. Go, stand and speak

Jer 20:9 But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

1 Cor 9:16b yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!  
(from the yet-to-be-revealed 12<sup>th</sup> apostle)

b. in the Temple...the house of God

c. to the people...God's beloved sheep without a shepherd upon whom the Good Shepherd has compassion (Matt 9:6) and for whom the Good Shepherd has given His Life (John 10:11)

d. all the words of this life...

- Jesus (John 1:4)
- in the Light, out of the darkness
- passed from spiritual death into everlasting spiritual life (John 5:24)
- being reconciled unto God, saved by grace thru faith
- trusting the Lord and not men
- accounted worthy to obtain the kingdom of God
- children of God and not children of the devil
- peace with God, joy in the Lord, content, having a blessed hope

i.e. the message from God: stay on track, don't lose focus, be busy about your calling

Matt 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.

The apostles' response:

- entered into the Temple at dawn, SunRise...as soon as they could
- taught all the words of this life
- walk by faith and not by sight

The step of faith out of prison is not on the path that leads to the safety of home, but the step on the other path that goes back to the Temple, the trouble spot

To return to the same place and resume the same work is walking by faith

v21b-23 But:

After the apostles were sprung from jail by God's messenger,

1. the high priest gets down to (the devil's) business
  - a. calls the Sanhedrin (religious authorities) together to deal with these "bad" guys
  - b. calls the elders (civil authorities) of the people together
  - c. summons the criminals
2. when the officers went to the prison, they found all as it should be
  - a. On the outside, everything looks in order, all safe and secure
  - b. the doors are locked
  - c. the guards were in place and were oblivious that anything was wrong (unaware of the way of escape of the apostles)
3. when they opened the prison doors, all was NOT as it should be
  - a. On the inside, an empty jail cell
  - b. And the officers come back to the authorities empty handed

v24-25 doubted...this would grow...teaching the people:

When the religious and civil authorities hear the report from the prison, they are dumbfounded, perplexed, wondering what

- this meant...how did those guys escape thru a locked jail door and how is it the guards know nothing?
- where this was headed...what is going to happen next?

While they are scratching their heads and muttering among themselves, they get another report: That which was lost is found

The apostles who were not in the jail cell are in the Temple... teaching the people again!

What they are trying to kill (the Church, Acts 4:17) survives and thrives

v26 brought them without violence:

The high priest and the rest of the ruling authorities of the Jews

- bullies
- enemies of the Cross

send the Chief of Temple Police to re-arrest the apostles and bring them back in

And the Chief did so, but not by using a show of force

Not violently enforcing the

- over-the-top “social distancing” restrictions of the authorities
- stay-at-home executive order to shut down business operations
- order of silence to protect the public health

because they feared the people would revolt and violently turn on them

v27-28 ye should not teach...ye have filled...intend:

The apostles, not resisting arrest because had they force would have been used,  
are brought before the authorities, where the high priest confronts them

1. Did we not command you to not teach in this name?

- Are you boys hard of hearing?
- What part of Ch 4:18 do you not understand?

They are claiming authority over the apostles

They still cannot bring themselves to say the name “Jesus”,  
as in the 1<sup>st</sup> Round of this contest (Ch 4:17)

In the terms of the Constitution of USA (Bill of Rights),  
they are taking away the Church’s

“freedom of religion”

“freedom of speech”

“freedom of assembly”

2. Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine

- PTL! Acts 1:8 is underway!
- Whose doctrine/authority? The Father’s (John 7:16)
  - Ch 2:21-24
  - Ch 3:13-15, 19-21, 26
  - Ch 4:2, 10-12

3. Ye intend to bring this man’s blood upon us

- They simply cannot say His name!
- Hold it right there...Matt 27:20-25
  - “Let Him be crucified!”
  - “Let Him be crucified” with greater vigor
  - “His blood be on us and on our children!”

v29 We ought to obey God rather than men:  
ought = “must”

In a world hostile to the Gospel, this is The First Word...and the Bottom Line

Wicked men imposed restrictions against the Church conducting its affairs

God said, Go stand and speak the all the words of this life

i.e. Do not stop doing what I have commanded you to do, no matter what  
man says or does to try to stop you

i.e. Fear God, do not fear man

Spoken by Spirit-filled Peter is a very simple truth, easy to understand

In May 2009, this is why we went to Mexico – to be obedient to God rather than  
to man

Note: 3 swine flu cases in Hermosillo turned out to be just common flu  
Foolishness, fear, political hype

v30-31 God...ye...God:

Peter speaks yet again “their doctrine”; the message has not changed!

A. God, the God of AI&J, raised up Jesus from the dead

B. They, the religious and civil authorities, cannot hide behind the  
Romans;  
they played Pilate like a fiddle,  
they played political hardball with Pilate (John 19:15),  
they relentlessly and vehemently pushed for the murder of Jesus

C. God exalted Jesus of Nazareth unto His right hand (in heaven) as  
His King/Ruler and Savior/Deliverer spoken of by Moses and the  
prophets

God’s predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge:

- To give
  - Repentance...turning away from sin and turning to God,  
away from the kingdom of darkness/world  
to the kingdom of Light/God
  - Forgiveness...wiping the filthy slate clean

Both are required for reconciliation

Both are gifts from God

- Luke 24:45-49

v32 we are His witnesses...also the Holy Ghost:

At the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses shall the matter...every word...be established

Deut 19:15

Matt 18:16

2 Cor 13:1

Heb 10:28

The witnesses of God of His doctrine (v30-31)

1. The apostles (the Church)

2. The Holy Spirit

a. Given by God to those who obey/love Him and submit to His authority

b. i.e. us, not you corrupt bullies

v33 cut...took counsel to slay:

The hearts of the religious and civil authorities were cut to pieces, shredded,  
by the inspired words spoken by Peter

They did not receive the rebuke, the correction, the instruction in righteousness

In their madness they resolved then and there...right in front of the apostles...  
to kill these men

*Deja vu* all over again, huh?

But then a cooler head stood up

v34-35 a Pharisee named Gamaliel:

Gamaliel

- a Pharisee (vs Sadducee, v17)
- grandson of Hillel, one of the most respected Rabbis in Jewish history
- a very respected and honored Rabbi in his own right
- had a very bright and zealous student at the time named Saul of Tarsus (Ch 22:3), whom Jesus would Personally “turn” and send

His counsel:

- we need to have a closed door meeting to talk about this
- Calm down  
Don't be rash.  
Be very careful!  
Think this through clearly and logically



v36-37 before these days...after:

Gamaliel gives the other authorities some recent history to consider in their shredded hearts

First, Theudas:

- a self-proclaimed somebody
- drew a following
- was murdered
- all those who had confidence in him melted away
- the whole thing came to nothing
- the “movement” died when the leader died
- the problem took care of itself

Secondly, Judas of Galilee:

- a self-proclaimed somebody during Luke 3:1-3, time of birth of Christ
- drew a following
- died
- all those who had confidence in him melted away
- the whole thing came to nothing
- the “movement” died when the leader died
- the problem took care of itself

With this historical reference, Gamaliel gives his advice

v38-39 Refrain from these men...night...cannot overthrow:

Refrain from these men...step back, withdraw, relax

Let's give it some time and watch from a distance.

Because one of two things will become patently obvious

1. If the words and actions of these men, this “Jesus Movement”, is of men
  - It will come to nothing, just as with Theudas and Judas of Galilee
  - The problem will take care of itself, history will repeat itself
  - With the death of the leader (Jesus) will come the death of the “movement”
2. If the words and actions of these men, this “Jesus Movement”, is of God (as claimed in v29-32)
  - You cannot stop it or destroy it...no one will be able to
  - You will find yourself fighting against God...no one can fight God and win
  - (his most zealous student will soon learn this truth)

v40 they agreed...beaten them...not speak:

A cooler head prevailed

The ruling authorities back off their murderous intent...but not their violent ways

They

- beat/scourged/whipped the apostles...an escalation in the persecution of the Church
- doubled-down on the order of silence, restrictions of speech and worship...in spite of the failure of those threats

How did the Church respond to the escalation in persecution and harassment?

Was the Church silenced/censored?

Did the Church cower in fear of man and retreat?

v41-42 rejoicing...daily...ceased not:

The beating and the threat did not cause the apostles to retreat...they rejoiced!

They were living the blessing...Matt 5:10-12

They deserved...and received...the beating and threat their Master did  
Matt 10:25-28

They were mistreated...evil was returned for their good...as was Jesus  
They are faithfully Matt 16:24

Peter will be inspired to write 1 Peter 1:3-9

1 Peter 2:19-24

1 Peter 3:12-18

1 Peter 4:12-16, 19

Rejoicing, the Church Forward marched (against the gates of hell)!

daily...every day, not once in a while or only when the social situation was favorable

in the temple...in public

and in every house...in private

they ceased not...did not miss a beat, continued in spite of the violence and threats of the authorities

to teach...the words of this life, all about Jesus Christ...to the believers

and preach...the words of this life, all about Jesus Christ...to unbelievers  
determinedly faithful and resolved to v29

Where this is headed, because one thing leads to another in an Adventure of Faith:

Acts 5:31  
Acts 5:32  
Acts 5:33  
Acts 5:31

Acts 7:35  
Acts 7:51  
Acts 7:54  
Acts 7:55

Prince/Ruler and Savior/Deliverer  
receiving or resisting holy Spirit  
hearts shredded by the sword of the Spirit  
exalted, to right hand of God

Spirit-filled Peter in Acts 5 is laying the “groundwork” for Spirit-filled Stephen in Acts 7  
But we will not hear from Gamaliel in Acts 7

Persecution of the Church erupts in Jerusalem, fueling Acts 1:8, Gamaliel’s most zealous student taking a very active role

### **Application**

1. The greater the persecution, the more the people of God thrive
  - Israel in Egypt
  - The Church in the world
2. A VERY timely Word for us today from the Word of God that transcends time:  
The Church in the COVID-19 situation

Our fellowship here in AZ

Governor’s Stay At Home order, as interpreted by the Atty General:  
Churches are essential

Our rights/freedoms of religion and speech and assembly were not taken away  
We were not censored or silenced or threatened

But, to not

- be “proud in our liberty”
- let our good be evil spoken of
- stumble brethren weak in the faith or unbelievers

we temporarily altered our right to assemble, not out of fear but of obedience to  
Scripture

Obey the Gov’t...which is NOT telling us to disobey God or else!

Rom 13:1-7

1 Peter 2:13-17

Don’t stumble the weak and be a good witness

1 Cor 8:9-12

1 Cor 9:19b-23

1 Cor 10:29-33

Rom 14:13-22a

weak in faith, weakest = dead in sin

might by all means save some

to give no offence that some might be saved

v16 our good be evil spoken of

v21 nor anything

We did not “cease and desist” from gathering, we simply temporarily changed  
how we gathered – from in-person to virtual  
And...Rom 8:28 joined by brethren in PA, WI  
gatherings on Tues pm and Wed pm involved more of us

Elsewhere in USA

Some governors’ orders, especially in liberal states, had more teeth...  
threats and police enforcement  
In-person gathering are still prohibited, sometimes even while the economy is  
being opened up

And churches are beginning to push back  
ala Acts 5:29  
Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please  
men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of  
Christ

President Trump has pushed back  
[ 5/22/20 news article ]

With the Word of God and the Spirit of God as the Church’s guide,  
may the Church respond in accordance with Scripture

Eyes on the Lord, pro-Kingdom of God, marching on the gates of hell  
Not eyes on man, anti-kingdom of this world, marching on the halls of  
Gov’t and filing lawsuits in the courts of man  
But rather as the early Church...Acts 3:24-30, Acts 4:41-42  
The Church fought neither “Jerusalem” nor Rome  
The Church marched into the Throne Room of God

USA next time...the Church should be prepared for an escalation in persecution,  
if it comes as it did between Acts 4 and Acts 5  
e.g. a church was burned down in MS after the pastor filed a lawsuit against the  
COVID-19 restrictions

With all of Acts 5 in mind, we need an eternal perspective to think with the mind of  
Christ in these days, the beginning of sorrows...

Luke 21:11-15, 28, 31, 34-36

1 Cor 6:19-20

The spiritual wickedness in high places, principalities and powers,  
the rulers of darkness in this world are directing public policy  
Our enemies and the weapons of our warfare are spiritual, not carnal...  
neither deceived men nor corrupt Gov’t  
We have already surrendered our individual rights to the Kok and Lol  
We should not get bent out of shape if wicked men and corrupt Gov’ts  
“take” from us what we have already given to our Lord

We must remember

- the Word of God is not bound
- what the world is trying to kill (Acts 4:17) survives and thrives
- the message from God: stay on track, don't lose focus, be busy about our calling

Matt 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world.

This “movement” blossomed when the Leader died...to this very day  
The message has not changed  
The need to focus has not changed

First Word and Bottom Line: We must obey God rather than men

So...let's Go, stand and speak the words of this life!

Let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus