



Acts 5:17-42:

But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. ...

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. ...

And someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." ...

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ...

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. And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. 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. 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. ...

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; 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, 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. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Four Ways our Passage Challenges our Faith and Why it is Important for us Today:

Four Ways our Passage Challenges our Faith and Why it is Important for us Today:

1. Our passage challenges our comfort and calls us to *costly faith*.



In our passage, we see that Biblical faith is costly faith:

The Apostles are imprisoned...

Verses 17-18: But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.

...threatened with harm

Verses 27-28: And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

Verse 33: ...When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

...they experience actual harm

Verse 40: 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.

There is a cost to follow Jesus:

1. There are Christians who suffer and are persecuted for their faith.

There is a cost to follow Jesus:

1. There are Christians who suffer and are persecuted for their faith.

2. *"I'm a Christian but I'm having a hard time engaging this text because this doesn't relate to me."*

Our passage presses the deeper question:

Do I follow Jesus even if it costs me something?

For many listening today, the cost might not be physical harm. But many of us face smaller, repeated decisions that have cost with our faith. Because of Jesus...

- Will I identify myself as a Christian and risk rejection?
- Will I refuse dishonesty at work if it costs me a career advancement?
- Will I disciple my children when culture pushes another direction?
- Will I forgive when it's costly?

As you and I think about costly faith today, realize...

a. Ease doesn't mean joy.

The idol of comfort diminishes joy, elevating inconveniences and making us more irritable.

As you and I think about costly faith today, realize...

b. All of us are inspired by costly sacrifice.

Deep down, we long for, are made for, and are shaped by love.

Four Ways our Passage Challenges our Faith and Why it is Important for us Today:

2. Our passage challenges compartmentalized faith and calls us to *public faith*.

The book of Acts challenges the modern assumption that faith only belongs in "private" or "church settings."

In Acts, Jesus is never a private Savior!

Our whole reading (beginning, middle, end) is about the public advance of the gospel:

(Beginning)

Verses 19-21: But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

(Middle)

Verses 27-32: And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

(End)

Verse 42: And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Application:

Christian friends, our faith is a public faith. Often what holds us back from living a public faith is fear.

Keep in mind that all of us publically identify with things we love.

What this means with Christianity and a public faith:

People don't share their faith publicly because they stop fearing people but rather they discover a love that is greater than the people they fear.

When it comes to public faith, our fear is not addressed by willpower, but worship.

One more thought:

When fear holds you back, remember that God is actively present!

Four Ways our Passage Challenges our Faith and Why it is Important for us Today:

3. Our passage challenges heart loyalties and calls us to an *unyielding faith*.

Verses 27-29: And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "*We must obey God rather than men.*"

"We must obey God rather than men"

1. Every person has an authority that shapes their decisions.

So this raises the question, "Who or what is your ultimate authority? Who's approval controls or shapes your life?"

Most of us are not going to be threatened with imprisonment for our faith this week. But every one of us will be tempted to let someone else's opinion matter more than Jesus.

Our passage calls for unyielding faith and making Jesus our ultimate authority.

"We must obey God rather than men"

2. If God is our ultimate authority, when earthly and human powers oppose and command against God's authority, we must obey God rather than men.

Examples: Hebrew Midwives in Exodus 1; Daniel; Daniel's 3 Friends

John Stott: *"To be sure, Christians are called to be conscientious citizens and generally speaking, to submit to human authorities (Romans 13:1, Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13). But if the authority concerned misuses its God-given power to command what he forbids or forbids what he commands, then the Christian's duty is to disobey the human authority in order to obey God's."*

2 Important to keep in mind here:

1) Unyielding faith is a resolute faith to the Lord, not an aggressive faith toward opposition.

2 Important to keep in mind here:

1) Unyielding faith is a resolute faith to the Lord, not an aggressive faith toward opposition.

2) What fuels unyielding faith is the gospel. Verses 30-32...

Verses 30-32: But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Summary:

When the beauty and truth of Jesus grips our hearts, it leads to conviction and an unyielding faith.

And when the gospel takes a hold of us in this way, we cannot hold it in, even if it costs us.

Four Ways our Passage Challenges our Faith and Why it is Important for us Today:

4. Our passage challenges our perspective on persecution and suffering and calls us to a joyful faith.

Verse 41: Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Joyful Faith:

1. Everyone wants joy but many think that it cannot exist in suffering. Here, we see that joy isn't found by avoiding hardship but in knowing Jesus deeply.

Christian friends, we can rejoice even in persecution and hardship...

- Because Jesus is risen and He reigns
- Because Jesus is worthy of all our praise and worship
- Because in Christ, your name is written in heaven
- Because you identify with Christ in his suffering
- Because the gospel is advancing even through it

DA Carson: *"Brothers and sisters, do you want Christian joy? Do you want the fullness of Christian joy? Be bold in your Christian witness, steadfast in integrity and righteousness, honest and quick to speak the name of Jesus, gently, humbly but boldly, irrefutably, and you will face opposition (I guarantee it), and you will be filled with joy, not only now but 50 billion years from now looking back on it and thinking it a very small price to pay to follow the way of Jesus Christ to the cross."*