



HAPPILY TAKING A BEATING FOR THE GOSPEL

– ACTS 5:12-42

GETTING STARTED

Signs, wonders and arrest warrants. It's amazing how often the greatest moments in our spiritual life are followed by some of the worst times. We find ourselves reading our Bibles steadily and then everything changes. We are getting opportunities to share our faith and suddenly we face unforeseen adversity for it. We really shouldn't be surprised that when we are following God faithfully, we encounter the greatest amount of spiritual warfare. Satan would love for us not to be following God and will try and use whatever means to stop it. And that is exactly what is happening in the book of Acts with the early church. As the church is growing and people are following Jesus, there is an increased amount of persecution against them. And yet in that persecution, we see the Holy Spirit at work to embolden and empower his people to rejoice that they can join the example of Jesus. We get that same opportunity.

READ THE TEXT: ACTS 5:12-42

¹²Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵so that they even carried



out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." ²¹ 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. ²² But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, ²³ "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ And someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." ²⁶ Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ 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." ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

³³ When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷After 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. ³⁸So 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; ³⁹but 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, ⁴⁰and 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. ⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Looking again at verse 15, Is this how we ought to treat pastors/preachers? (No!) What is Luke trying to communicate about this point in time and about Peter?
2. In verses 34-39 we are introduced to Gamaliel who speaks about how to discern whether God is with the apostles or not. How should we understand instances where God seems to speak truthfully to/through the mouths of people who don't follow him? (see also: Numbers 22:12ff, John 11:49-51, etc)

[Extra verses for studying this passage: Philippians 3:8-11]

APPLY THE TEXT

3. What should our response be to suffering? Do you think that is our natural response? How can we train ourselves to respond this way?
4. Why were the apostles so bold to preach the gospel? How can we imitate them?
5. [Leaders: think carefully about whether you want to ask this question in your group!] Taking verse 29 into account with a passage like Romans 13:1-7, when are we called to follow the instructions of our government and when are we called to disobey them?



SHARE & PRAY

1. As we study the book of Acts, think carefully about 1 or 2 people that you would like to actively share the gospel with. Share them with your life group and hold one another accountable in prayer and support.
2. In light of Acts 5:12-42 let us pray that God would give us more boldness to proclaim the gospel, more opportunities to seek it out and more courage to face adversity with all confidence.

