

# How do we know we are obeying God?

Acts 5:12-5:42 January 5, 2020

## Acts Series: Taking the Message of Jesus' Kingdom Everywhere

<sup>17</sup> Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. <sup>18</sup> They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. <sup>19</sup> But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. <sup>20</sup> "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life." <sup>21</sup> At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. <sup>22</sup> But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, <sup>23</sup> "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside." <sup>24</sup> On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

<sup>25</sup> Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." <sup>26</sup> At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. <sup>27</sup> The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. <sup>28</sup> "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

<sup>29</sup> Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! <sup>30</sup> The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. <sup>31</sup> God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. <sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

<sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. <sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. <sup>35</sup> Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. <sup>36</sup> Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

<sup>38</sup> Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. <sup>39</sup> But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

<sup>40</sup> His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

<sup>41</sup> The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. <sup>42</sup> Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The New International Version. (2011): Zondervan.

## 1. Persecution Pending

Acts 5:12-16

*"No one else dared join them..."* Acts 5:13

### A. Believers activity

Acts 5:12

The largest place to meet and where people go to meet God

### B. Public separation

Acts 5:13

Fearful yet intrigued

### C. Popularity and more believers

Acts 5:13, 14

No one dared join them (the apostles, publicly in the temple)

People continued to believe in Jesus Christ

### D. Miracles and Crowds

Acts 5:15, 16

Are people coming out for what they can 'get'

God's power is far superior to sickness or evil

## 2. Persecuted for Popularity

Acts 5:17-24

*"The high priest and his officials...were filled with jealousy."* Acts 5:17

### A. Jealousy and Jail

Acts 5:17, 18

The motive was based on status and pride not content

### B. Liberty and Life

Acts 5:19-21

God will always accomplish his will so give the message of life

### C. Trial and Teaching

Acts 5:21-24

They haven't run away they have resumed teaching publicly

## 3. Persecuted for a Guilty Conscience

Acts 5:25-39

*"Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"* Acts 5:28

### A. Political Sensitivity

Acts 5:26-28

The arrest is made gently for fear of the people

## B. God Sensitivity

Acts 5:29-32

Peter shows how God has reversed their decision/authority

## C. Emotional Sensitivity

Acts 5:33

The council reacted with extreme emotion intent to kill

## D. Wise Council from a surprising source

Acts 5:34-39

If this is from God we cannot succeed in suppression

## 4. Persecuted for Jesus

Acts 5:40-42

*The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.* Acts 5:41

## A. Rejoicing

Acts 5:41

**Rejoicing** χαίρω (*chairō*) A Greek verb (participle) used in the NT commonly (74 times 12 in Luke and only 7 times in Acts 5:41; 8:39; 11:23; 13:48; 15:23; 23:26) It means to rejoice, be glad or be delighted. Translated: NIV, ESV, NASB, NLT, NKJV, KJV Rejoicing

**Suffering Disgrace** ἀτιμάζω (*atimazō*) A Greek verb (infinitive) used rarely in the NT (7 times and only twice by Luke in Luke 20:11 and here in Acts 5:41) It can mean to treat shamefully or to cause to be dishonoured. Translated: NIV, NLT, Suffering Disgrace; ESV, Suffer Dishonor; NASB, NKJV, KJV, Suffer Shame

Is their pathway the easy way or the right way?

## B. Continuing Teaching and Proclaiming

Acts 5:42

**Proclaim** εὐαγγελίζω (*euangelizō*) A Greek verb (participle) used in the NT regularly (54 times, 25 of those by Luke, 10 in Luke and 15 in Acts, Paul uses it 19 times in all of his writing.) It is used for the first time in Acts here (5:42; 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40; 10:36; 11:20; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:16; 17:18) It means to proclaim, tell the good news, preach the gospel. Translated: NIV, Proclaiming; ESV, NASB, NLT, NKJV, KJV, Preach(ing)

## How do we know if we are obeying God?

By careful dedication to his direction – Bible

By being attentive to the prompting of his Spirit

By prayerfully and respectfully being ready to honour God

By knowing that opposition, suffering and adversity will test our resolve

## Study Questions

For your personal study or with family, a friend, mentor or Life Group

### Beginning:

1. What insight, idea, question or principle from Sunday's message did you find most helpful, eye opening or troubling?
2. What are people's reactions to the word preach or evangelize?

### Learning:

3. Notice the reactions in The signs and wonders performed by the apostles elicit both fear (5:11) and honor (5:13) from the people of Jerusalem, but jealousy (5:17) and rage (5:33) from its leaders. Our working definition of a sign is an act of God that directs a person toward Himself. A wonder is an act of God that creates curiosity or stirs the imagination in regard to who God is.
4. Read Acts 5:28. Notice whose name is not being spoken and what offence the Sanhedrin is now grappling with. What outcomes will this increasing pressure cause for the Apostles, other believers and the Sanhedrin?
5. Read Acts 5:29-32 and note the number of times 'God' is mentioned and is the subject of the sentences. Whose interests are the Apostles most concerned with? Why?
6. Read Acts 5:33 and 34. This is the first time in Acts we see a Pharisee mentioned. In the gospels this group is generally cast negatively. (notable exceptions: Luke 23:50-52 and John 3:1, 2) However in Acts we will see more positive framing for the Pharisees. Why do you suppose that is? (Acts 22:3)

### Applying:

7. Look at verse Acts 5:23 and consider that this is actually a 'sign' or 'wonder' performed by God. What is the reaction of the Jewish leadership? Why should it not be a surprise that similar denials occur even today?
8. Compare Acts 4:19 and 5:29. Where are the statements similar and where are they different in meaning? How does a follower of Jesus reflect these verses without being rude, insufferable or arrogant?
9. Compare Acts 4:29, 30 with Acts 5:41, 42. Consider this is the answer to the prayer. Also consider that suffering and danger are not the prayer concerns of the Apostles. We usually see suffering as a negative indicator and something to be avoided at all costs. The Apostles rejoiced in suffering. How do we need to think about suffering and sharing the gospel?

### Praying:

10. Pray that you might to be more courageous as you proclaim the gospel.

Mentoring: What have been some of your most significant failures in sharing the gospel? Where have you truly suffered (or not) in sharing the gospel. When is it the right time or the wrong time to suffer for sharing? Where would you find 'rejoicing' in the midst of what might look like a bad proclaiming result?