

KEEP JESUS WEIRD

An 8-Part Study of the Book of Acts - **Part 5: Can't Stop, Won't Stop** - Sermon Study Guide 5|5|19

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Study Questions:

What stood out to you from today's message about the persecution of Christians across the world?

The Sadducees were some of the wealthiest, most powerful, most highly educated people in first-century Jerusalem. Why were they so jealous?

"Go...and tell the people all about this new life." What new life?

Look at verse 24, especially the phrase "wondering what this might lead to." What were they afraid the gospel of Jesus Christ might lead to?

Verse 26 implies that the Sadducees (by way of the captain and his officers) manipulated the crowds by not using force to arrest the apostles (even though they were happy to use force outside of public view [see verse 40]). How have you experienced feelings like fear and jealousy leading to sins like deceit and manipulation?

Look at verse 28. Why do you think the members of the Sanhedrin were so insistent that the apostles not teach in "this name"?

In verse 29, Peter said, "We must obey God rather than human

Bible References: Acts 5

17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life."

21 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. 22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, 23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside." 24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." 26 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.

27 The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. 28 "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." 29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the

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beings!" Most Jews believed the Sanhedrin spoke on God's behalf. Based on what information or authority did the apostles believe they, and not the Sanhedrin, were being obedient to God?

Verse 31: "...that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins." Why were members of the Sanhedrin "furious" (v.33) when they heard this?

Who was Gamaliel, and where else is he mentioned in the New Testament?

What do verses 35-37 tell us about the frequency of rebellious Jewish uprisings in the first century?

Verses 38-39 are key. "...if their purpose...is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." To do this, you really have to trust God's providence! Have you ever applied this sort of wisdom to events going on in your own life?

Verse 41: "The apostles left...rejoicing they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." Have you ever suffered disgrace on account of your love of Jesus? Whether or not you have, do you think if you were made to suffer for Jesus, you'd rejoice like the apostles rejoiced? Why or why not?

Will you commit to praying for Christians across the world who are suffering disgrace (and even death) for the Name of Jesus? Every day this week, ask God to strengthen and comfort them, and ask Him to show you how He's calling you to support your brothers and sisters caught in the crosshairs of persecution. Thank you!

dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

34 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. 35 Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 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. 37 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. 38 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. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

40 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. 41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 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.

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