

ACTS 5:12-42

ACTING WITH AUTHORITY

(REVIEW)

The Book of Acts is about the birth of “***The Church***” - What do I mean by “***The Church?***” - The Church is anyone, anywhere, at any time who confesses Jesus as their Savior and Lord - anyone who recognizes that because of their sin they need a savior and recognizes that Jesus, and ONLY Jesus is that Savior

(Acts 4:12) “***Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved***”

The Book of Acts, written by Luke, is his account of this new church, this body of like-minded Believers, who were inspired and lead along by the Holy Spirit

We read a number of times in these early chapters that the Apostles and these new Believers were of “one accord,” meaning they were of the same mind, the same heart, the same focus

They had a single minded focus on the Person and Ministry of Jesus - And that focus became a single-minded purpose and dedication to preach and teach about salvation by Grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone

In chapter 1 Luke reminds us of his credentials as an investigator from his gospel account of Jesus - He recounts that the Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus

Chapter 2 we read of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and that Peter preached by the power and authority of the Holy Spirit and 3,000 got saved - The Church is born and begins to grow

Chapter 3 Peter and John bring healing to a lame man by the authority of Jesus at the Temple - The people are amazed and again Peter preaches and proclaims Christ crucified and resurrected

Chapter 4 Peter & John are arrested by the religious leaders; surprise surprise!!! The religious leaders want to know by what power or what name they have healed this man - So Peter, ***“filled with the Holy Spirit”*** gives them the answer, but it’s an answer they don’t want to hear - **BY THE POWER AND NAME OF THE RISEN JESUS!!! - AMEN?**

This is such a pivotal chapter - As Pastor Silas taught a couple of weeks ago; we see here the first opposition to this new Church from the rulers and religious leaders - After arresting and confronting Peter & John the so called religious “rulers & leaders” forbid them to speak or teach in the Name of Jesus

It’s here that we begin to see what Pastor Silas called **Authentic Eternal Life** or Authentic Christianity - Faith being born out in the lives of Believers - Faith that is visible, tangible and effective for the Kingdom of God

They were gathering together to pray with boldness (4:23-31)

They were speaking the Word of God with Boldness (4:31)

They were witnessing openly and boldly to the resurrection of Jesus and it says that; ***“great Grace was upon them all.”*** (v. 33)

Here it is, it’s happening!! - Faith is on the move - It’s active and alive - It’s authentic and effective - It’s changing lives eternally

Remember Pastor Silas talked about the 4 marks of authentic Christianity;

1. Serving God - especially in suffering
2. Knowing God - personally - it’s a personal relationship
3. Experiencing God - Filled with His Holy Spirit - His reality
4. Exhibiting God Generously - sharing/proclaiming/radical generosity

What we are going to see in this week’s verses is a continuation, an expansion of these chapter 4 verses - More authentic Christianity - More of God’s Holy Spirit and power - More boldness in proclaiming Jesus, especially in the face of adversity, opposition and suffering

The culmination of this week's teaching and of the early church will be in the last 3 verses - We'll look at that in a few minutes

Of course we don't to forget last week's message; Autopsy of Hypocrisy

The beginning of chapter 5 we see Ananias & his wife Sapphira bringing deception and hypocrisy into the early church - And we heard the first mention of Satan in the Book of Acts, as he attempts to derail the church - Peter, with what I believe was supernatural discernment confronts the deception, and death ensues

God is serious about sin - He is not going to let the enemy stop His plan and purpose for these Apostles or His plan and purpose for us **AMEN?**

Isaiah 54:17 says; ***"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you, in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, Says the Lord."***

(READ 5:12-42)

As I mentioned earlier, these verses are a continuation/expansion of this new "Church," this new way of life - God, through His Holy Spirit was establishing Believers in the solid foundation of Christ and empowering them to proclaim the truth of Christ

Through this there was a great conversion of "multitudes" - But, there was also great opposition by the ruling class

V.12-16 - Here we see the demonstration of God's power through the Apostles by signs & wonders - And the apostles ***"were all with one accord"*** - they were together in this - they prayed together - walked out their faith together - they were of a singular focus and mind, zeroed in on bringing the truth of Jesus to the people wherever and whenever they were called

Verse 13 seems to say that those outside the apostles circle held them in high regard but didn't want to join them - it says they believed but they didn't want to get to close to the power of God that was manifesting through the apostles - Why?

What was happening through and around the apostles was not something to be taken lightly or casually - They believed but their faith was new and perhaps they didn't know what to make of these great manifestations - Or perhaps they weren't quite ready to jump into the "fray" so to speak

We can be like that too - Not sure at first how deeply we want to commit ourselves - We watch the teachers teach and the leaders lead and we are on the fringe, believing but not fully committing to the faith

There are serious implications and consequences to a full commitment to the Lord as we will see here in a few minutes - There are also great blessings and promises when we commit our lives to the One Who saved us, the One Who died so that we might live forever - **AMEN?**

So what was the purpose of this demonstration of God's power?

Remember, this is the very early "Church" being established by God through His Holy Spirit - The apostles were eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus and by many signs & wonders God was now bearing witness to the ministry of the apostles - His authority, through them was being clearly manifested

Hebrews 2:2-5 says; **2 "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"**

Not only was God establishing His "Church" and bearing witness to the ministry of the apostles but He was confirming their message about Jesus' earthly ministry and purpose that they were proclaiming

This was real power - What the people were seeing and experiencing was the reality of God in the lives of these Apostles - Their lives were a living demonstration of God's plan and purpose - It was showing that these guys, these apostles were for real, and the people were taking notice - And it says that multitudes were coming to the Lord and being saved - And many were being healed

How about our lives? - Are we fully committed to the Lord, to the Gospel? Can we affect great change in people's lives? - Yes we can!

How? - By the Word of God and the testimony of our lives - Romans 10:17 says; ***“So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”***

Speak the Word of God - There is great power in it - Let the Holy Spirit speak to the hearts of people - We speak the Word, He does the saving

With the Holy Spirit moving and leading we will see conviction and conversion as we see here - We will also see opposition, oppression and persecution

Verse 17&18 say that the High Priest and the Sadducees were ***“full of indignation”*** and took the apostles and threw them into prison

Another translation could be envy - These men of authority and power were envious of the apostles - The apostles were demonstrating power, authority and influence - There were supernatural signs and wonders and people were coming to them and professing faith in and allegiance to Jesus

These leaders were probably thinking; *‘we got rid of that blasphemer Jesus by crucifying Him on a cross, (even though we have no idea where His body went) Now these guys show up talking about this Jesus and how He rose from the dead and that He is alive and sitting at the right hand of the Father - And all this supernatural stuff, what's up with that? Some kind of trickery or deception, we'll have none of that'*

They hadn't seen anything yet!!

After being thrown into prison the Lord once again intervenes, and by an angel brings the apostles out of prison - And as always there is a plan and a purpose - The angel didn't tell them to flee, to run away before anyone found out they had escaped - The angel told them; ***“Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of life.”*** (V.20)

The angel sent them right into the epicenter of the city, the heart of Israelite life and faith - The place where they had been and would be most visible - Why?

The verse itself tells us; to speak all the words of life - What life? - Let me give you a few verses to highlight - In John 10:10 Jesus said; ***“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*** - Who is they? The verses just prior to that one say it is those “sheep” who follow the Good Shepherd, Jesus - That is, all who believe - That's you and me - **AMEN?**

Jesus also said in John 14:6; ***“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me.”*** - There's that exclusive claim about there being ONLY one way to heaven, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! That's what the apostles and the early church were proclaiming and that is what I am proclaiming to you here today - Come to faith in Jesus and receive eternal life with Him in heaven!

And in John 10:27&28; ***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (28) And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”*** - That's a big time promise folks!

And finally, Colossians 3:1-3; ***“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. (2) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”***

LIFE! - ANY QUESTIONS? - Let's proclaim it - Let's live it - Let's embrace it fully

'I pray Lord that we would talk Your talk and walk Your walk and live the life you have given us' - **AMEN!**

Verse 21 tells us they heard what the angel said and they obeyed - No theological discussion or debate - apparently no concern about the response from the rulers - Ready to suffer (literally) any consequences for their Savior -

They just ***“entered the temple and taught”***

Pretty straight forward: Word of God - Life of Jesus - Holy Spirit - Signs and Wonders - Power of God - Let's go!!!

So the council gathers - But when the officers go to get the prisoners, the doors are closed and locked - The guards are in place where they had been all night but no one is inside - Then they wonder; where is this going? - What's going to happen next? - How will we resolve this?

Then the council gets word that these men whom they had imprisoned were back at it, teaching and preaching to the people in the temple - I've got to think that what was indignation in verse 17 is now full blown rage in verse 25 - They're thinking; *‘these disciples are just not getting it’* - *‘Don't they know who we are?’* - *‘Don't they know we hold the power, we are the authority?’*

STAND BY! - Pete and Company are about to set them straight on Who has the power and the authority

So the apostles are brought before the council and the High Priest asks them; ***“Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?”*** (V.28) - This is really more of a statement of reminder than it is a question

Notice they can't or won't even say “the name” - You all know the name; ***“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*** (Philippians 2:9-11)

(Wise guy)

Peter and the apostles have an answer - They give a simple but definitive statement of their own; ***“We ought to obey God rather than men.”*** (V.29)

Ain't that the truth? - We, Calvary Chapel Cape Cod, ought to obey God rather than men - **AMEN?**

A note of caution! - This statement and demonstration by the apostles is NOT license to disobey authorities that we don't agree with politically or otherwise - This disobedience is specific to anything that goes against the Word of God

The midwives in Exodus 1, refused to kill all of the Jewish males; God honored them

Rahab the harlot in Joshua 2, hid the spies and lied to the authorities; God blessed her and put her in the line of the Messiah

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego would not bow in Daniel 3; God stood with them in the fire

Daniel refused to cease praying in direct violation of the law; God saved him in the lion's den

We should not stand on the authority of Scripture in order to justify our behavior but to proclaim the truth of our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ - **AMEN?**

I like what the High Priest accused them of in the second half of v.28; ***“... you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine...”*** - Oh I hope so!!! - I pray we would hear;

‘Calvary Chapel, you have filled Sandwich with your doctrine. You have filled Yarmouth with your doctrine. You have filled Marconi Beach with your doctrine. You have filled Cape Cod with your doctrine.’

Verses 30-32 are a proclamation of God's power and authority in response to the plans of men, more than it is a condemnation of what they tried to do - They tried to do away with Jesus; God's plan was to raise Him up

and exalt Him on high at His right hand, ruling and reigning, ***“Prince and Savior”*** - giving repentance and forgiveness

The apostles finish by telling the council; *‘We’re just His witnesses. If you have an issue with all of this you need to take it up with Him. Oh, and don’t forget God’s Holy Spirit who also bears witness. God has given His Spirit to those who obey Him.’* - They’re telling them that this will not end, they will not stop - They are filled with the Holy Spirit and the power and the authority of God and they can do nothing less and nothing else!!

Well don’t you know, the council is furious and wants to kill them - Again, surprise surprise - We’ve seen this movie before; John 11:47-53 talks about a meeting of the Sanhedrin to discuss what to do about Jesus. He was performing signs and wonders, many were coming to believe in Him - Sound familiar?

Verse 53 says; ***“From that day forward they plotted to take His life.”***

We also just saw this same scene in chapter 4 of Acts where Peter and John are arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin - They were forbidden to speak or teach in the name of Jesus

Peter and John responded in a similar way as the apostles do in chapter 5 challenging the Sanhedrin to decide whether or not it was right to listen to men more than God

A question we need to ask ourselves - To challenge ourselves and respond in like manner as the apostles did - **AMEN?**

What to do what to do, what’s a council to do?

One of their own, Gamaliel, proceeds to give the council some council
Gamaliel was a much respected and revered Jewish religious leader, a Pharisee and a teacher - He was the teacher of Saul of Tarsus who of course became the Apostle Paul

Gamaliel proceeds to give some very sound practical advice regarding religious movements - by citing two examples of men who had gathered to themselves followers but eventually came to ruin, he tells the council it is better to let these men, the apostles self-destruct - He says that if in fact their work is of men they will fail as others have

But, he says; if they're of God, then you will not be able to overthrow it and in fact you will be fighting against God

The council decides this is wise advice and agrees with Gamaliel that they should let them go

Maybe to satisfy some within the council, or just for "good measure" they beat the apostles before releasing them - They also commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus

Perhaps the council believed the beating would destroy or diminish the apostle's resolve - They would be wrong - Not only did it not diminish their resolve but it strengthened and renewed it

The last two verses read; ***"So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."***

These men had been warned and threatened repeatedly not to preach or teach in the name of Jesus - They continued, ***"in the temple, and in every house"*** no matter the cost

The opposition had intensified, now elevated to beating and they continued

Are we willing to suffer for Jesus? - Oh I'm sure many of us have experienced ridicule or slander (probably behind our back) or may have been ostracized from a group or even our own family - Are we willing to take to the next level?

Now this does not mean we go looking for persecution or suffering - What we are called to do, what these apostles were called to do is the same thing; preach and teach in the name of Jesus - Proclaim Christ crucified and risen - Proclaim eternal life through faith in Jesus

They had the Holy Spirit - We have the Holy Spirit - It's the same Holy Spirit

They had power and authority - We have power and authority - We have the power and authority of the Word of God - Remember; ***“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”***

The Holy Spirit moved in and among these apostles and led them along

He is doing the same with us - Romans 8:8-10 says; ***“So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.***

(9) But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (10) And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

Our demonstration of God's power is our changed lives, our commitment to Him and our witness about how we were when He found us and how we are now after placing our faith and trust in Jesus Christ

He is the One Who suffered and died for our sake - He suffered and died to save souls - Should we not be willing to do the same for Him, for the kingdom of God?

Let's seek the change God wants us to be, with all power and authority - He loves us right where we He found us and He love us too much to leave us there - He has given us power and authority of His Word to proclaim Him

His Word says we can take great joy when we suffer for His name - Let us not hold back for fear of men but go forward for the Lord Jesus and speak, teach and preach the Truth in Love

(End) Luke 6:22&23; ***“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for***

the Son of Man's sake. (23) Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets."

AMEN!!!