

The Book of Acts

GROUP CURRICULUM

SERMON **THE FUTILITY OF OPPOSING GOD (ACTS 5:17-42)**

DATE **DECEMBER 8, 2019**

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. 37 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. 38 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; 39 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, 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. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

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1. When was the last time you felt intimidated by an individual or group of people?
2. In the passage on the page, circle all the words that speak of emotions.
3. Fill in the blanks below to complete the main idea from this Sunday:
When you _____ the church, you oppose _____
and when you _____ God, you _____.
4. Why according to **Acts 5:17** were the religious leaders opposing the apostles? What do you think was behind this?
5. How had the apostles disobeyed the council according to **Acts 5:28**? What had just happened to make the high priest and the rest of the council so angry with the disciples in **Acts 5:33**? It can be seen that the Lord opens several doors in this passage. With verse references for each jot down one or two of these. In the box below write down one specific door that you are praying for God to open in your life.
6. Read **Philippians 1:12-14**. Can you think of other instances in the Bible when God used the suffering of his people to advance his purposes? Does this apply to your life right now?
7. Read **Hebrews 12:1-3**. How can understanding Jesus' example help us endure our trials and pain?
8. Read **Colossians 1:24**, **1 Peter 4:12-16** and **Acts 5:41**. What is the common response of these believers in the face of persecution? Do you consider persecution or trial to be a privilege or a problem? How would your life change if you faced being physically hurt for obeying Christ?
9. What do you want to remember the next time you are challenged or hurt for your faith in Christ?
10. Is there someone you know, or someone you can prayerfully consider inviting to church this Christmas season?
