

The Price of Obedience! Acts 5:12–42

Welcome

Series Review

Many Christians feel like their faith is under attack. How should we respond?

Read: Acts 5:12-42

1. God's power attracts some but repels others. Acts 5:12-18

Explain: Verse 14 says, “more and more people were brought to the Lord, crowds of both men and women.” However, **verse 17** says, the religious leaders were “filled with Jealousy”.

Illustration: Why do we not talk more about politics?

- **Jesus lived in a much worse political, cultural environment but stayed laser focused on teaching the open hearted how to be faithful in a terrible environment.** He never confronts Rome directly. The OT prophets did but that is because Israel was a theocracy. This does not mean that would never be appropriate but generally the question we are answering is how do we follow Christ no matter what happens in culture.
- **There are so many issues:** ICE, Minnesota Fraud, Foreign Policy (Venezuela, Iran, Israel, Palestine, North Korea, Ukraine, Russia, China, Nigeria), Epstein, Transgender movement, Election integrity, Bad Bunny, National Debt, Political Corruption, women's rights, climate change, gun laws, mass shootings, persecution of Christians. If I talk about one issue per/week, I would never get through all the issues and moments.
- **If I address one but fail to address another, it appears we do not care about what we did not mention.**
- **Often, we do not even know the truth or do not know for years:** Covid, Epstein...
- **The church is not supposed to become a political echo chamber.** We are supposed to be a gospel echo chamber attracting one political flavor and turning away everyone else. The gospel offends those who are not spiritually open but we do not want to offend.
- **We have people who are at very different stages of their spiritual and political journey.** My theology, politics and ethics have matured through the years as I have followed Christ. We do not want our political opinions to be the gateway to a person's spiritual journey.
- **What do we do?**
 - **Make disciples.** If you want people to adopt Biblical values and ethics they must learn to follow Christ first.
 - **Avoid creating political or ethical barriers.** We welcome everyone to follow Christ, and we trust Christ to straighten out their theology, politics and ethics.

Argue: John 11, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, the Jews begin to plot to kill him.

Apply: Let's stay open and hungry for God's presence and power in the church. However, just know, when God moves it attracts some and repels others. There is a mystery here, let's just keep moving toward Jesus and trust God with the results.

2. God is present in persecution and suffering. Acts 5:19-21

Explain: When the church is under attack, God is still with us. God sent an angel to free the apostles but not to send them home but back to preaching. God's presence fuels obedience, not escape. Jesus did not come to get us to heaven. Jesus came to bring heaven to earth. We are not trying to escape but redeem. The church is not going to preach politics but we are going to teach you to follow Christ so you can go out and transform the world.

Illustrate: Dr. King, black history month- We follow Christ and then go out to change our world. We do not hide in church; we teach people to follow Christ and then go into our world.

Argue: **Matthew 10:24-26 (Student is not above his teacher), Luke 10**

Apply: When God is our treasure, suffering is generally not seen as an obstacle.

3. Obedience is not optional. Acts 5:27-32

Explain: They were order to stop preaching Jesus but made it clear, they would obey God not man. Obedience usually requires a short-term sacrifice but produces a long-term benefit. Disobedience often includes a short-term benefit but produces long-term suffering.

Illustration: Nigerian Pastors: Boko Haram is a jihadist militant group active primarily in northeastern Nigeria who have killed 100k Christians since coming to power in 2009. Pastors have been warned repeatedly: *Stop preaching Christ or face death.* Many continue anyway. Some have buried family members. When asked why they stay, one pastor said, "If we stop preaching, we die spiritually anyway."

- Iran, same

Argue: **Acts 4:20, John 14:15, "If you love me..."**

Apply: This is a real challenge in America. Many Christians obey when it is convenient and so our influence in culture is limited. If you were convinced God is good and has your best interest in mind, you would gladly obey.

4. God is sovereign over our persecution and suffering. Acts 5:33-39

Explain: **If we are persecuted, God is still in control.** Verse 33, the religious leaders heard their testimony and decided to kill the apostles. However, Gamaliel, one of the Pharisees speaks up and shares a timeless truth; If it is of God, you cannot stop it. History certainly demonstrates this is right.

Illustration: **In the 1760s, French Philosopher, Voltaire famously declared, "In one hundred years the Bible will be a forgotten book."** He mocked Scripture and believed reason and secularism would replace Christian faith. Voltaire devoted significant energy to attacking Christianity intellectually, not just personally rejecting it. About 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used Voltaire's former home to print and distribute Bibles all across Europe. Today, the Bible is by far the best-selling book around the world every year.

Argue: **Isaiah 40:8, The grass withers and the flower fades but the word of God remains forever!**

Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church..."

Daniel 4:17b, “The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to whoever he wants.”

Apply: God is sovereign and man is free. God works through the free choices of men to bring about his redemptive purpose in the world. God works in all things. One day we will get to the other side and agree.

5. Persecution is reason to Rejoice! Acts 5:40-42

Explain: The apostles did not rejoice because of their pain, but because they were following Jesus so closely that like Jesus, they began to experience persecution.

Illustration: India, 1996, they rejoiced!

Quote: Tertullian, an early church father, wrote: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

Argue: Matthew 5:10-12, 2 Timothy 3:12

Apply: Be with, Become Like, Do- persecution. Many Western believers face little physical persecution, yet struggle with spiritual boldness. Our challenge is not imprisonment—but indifference, distraction, and fear of social cost. “Pray that we remain faithful. Pray that we do not deny Christ. Do not pray that persecution stops.”

Invitation