

# PART 8: MINISTRY AND HOSTILITY

## ACTS 5:12-42

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### MAIN IDEA

**Faithful gospel ministry results in both opposition and blessing.**

If there was solid external opposition to the preaching of the gospel before, it grew even more severely, but it did not slow down the impressive growth of the early church or the preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ. As the apostle's preaching expanded and attracted more and more people, they were met by religious leaders who tried once more to make them stop. Capturing and flogging the apostles had no effect as they continued proclaiming the risen Christ. The early church's joy and growth could not be stopped. God was behind it all!

### I. GOSPEL MINISTRY ENRICHES THE POOR IN SPIRIT (5:12-16)

- A. The twelve apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people.
  - 1. Location: In Solomon's Colonnade.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Solomon's colonnade (ESV) was a portico surrounding the temple's Court of the Gentiles.

- a) The outer part of the temple had porches on all four sides.
  - b) The Royal Porch on the south had four rows of pillars.
  - c) Solomon's Porch was on the east side of the temple, with two rows of pillars.
  - d) It was called Solomon's Porch because people thought it contained the remains of Solomon's temple.
  - e) It was a common place for people to congregate for public lectures and discussions (Keener 291)
2. Unbelievers ("no one else") dared to join the crowd of believers even though they respected them.
    - a) Many non—Jews attended synagogue and believed in Israel's God without fully converting and keeping Jewish rules.
    - b) It is possible that a similar group of Jewish outsiders who respect the Jesus movement without converting to it is in view here (Keener 335)
  3. The number of believers grew and grew.
- B. More and more people believed in the Lord.
1. The "poor in spirit" (people who recognize their spiritual poverty, their need for God), including the sick, and those tormented by impure spirits (demons), were healed, some even believing that Peter's shadow would heal them.<sup>2</sup>
    - a) Ancient people thought that one's shadow was attached to one's self.
    - b) In Jewish law, if one's shadow touched a corpse one was as unclean as one who physically touched the corpse.
  2. Crowds also gathered from towns around Jerusalem.

## II. GOSPEL MINISTRY ENRAGES THE PRIDEFUL (5:17-40)

- A. The apostles were arrested by the religious leaders (5:17-18)
1. The high priest and the Sadducees arrested the apostles.
  2. The basis of the arrest was their jealousy of the apostles.
  3. The apostles were put in jail.
- B. The miraculous release by God (5:19-20)
1. That night an angel opened the jail doors and brought out the apostles.
  2. The angel instructed the apostles to stand in the temple courts and continue preaching the gospel.

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<sup>2</sup> The text does not specifically say people were healed by Peter's shadow; it merely tells us people thought it would, and they took action based on this belief. We don't know for certain if people were actually healed when the shadow of Peter passed over them.

C. The recapture by the religious leaders (5:21-26)

1. The next day the Jewish leaders discovered the empty jail even though it had been locked, and guards stood at the jail door the whole time.
2. The Jewish leaders learned that the apostles were back in the temple teaching the people.
3. The apostles are brought before the religious leaders again but without force because they feared the people.

D. The trial of the apostles (5:27-32)

1. The apostles are brought before the Sanhedrin and reminded that they were forbidden from teaching in this man's name (the religious leaders were obviously avoiding the name Jesus<sup>3</sup>).
2. Peter and the other apostles reply by saying they must obey God instead of humans.
3. Peter reminds these Jewish leaders that they killed Jesus, but God raised him up and exalted him.
4. Jesus was sent to bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.

E. The Jewish leader's deliberation and verdict (5:33-40)

1. The Jewish religious leaders, reacting in anger, wanted to kill the apostles.
  - a) The 71 member Sanhedrin was made up of Sadducees and Pharisees.
  - b) The Sadducees were powerful but never gained the popularity of the Pharisees.
2. Gamaliel, a respected Pharisee, convinces them not to do this.
  - a) The Sadducees were afraid of going against the Pharisees who had much of the public's support.
3. The apostles are flogged and ordered again to stop preaching the gospel and released.

### **III. GOSPEL MINISTRY ENERGIZES THE MINISTER(S) (5:41-42)**

A. The joyful worthiness of suffering for Jesus Christ (5:41)

1. The apostles left the Sanhedrin.
2. They rejoiced because they had suffered for "the Name."

B. The gospel grew even more (5:42)

1. The good news was preached day after day.
2. It was preached in the temple courts and house to house.

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<sup>3</sup> Jesus means "Yahweh saves."

#### IV. APPLICATION

- A. Be bold in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.
- B. Be prepared for possible rejection.
- C. Be honored to identify with Jesus Christ.