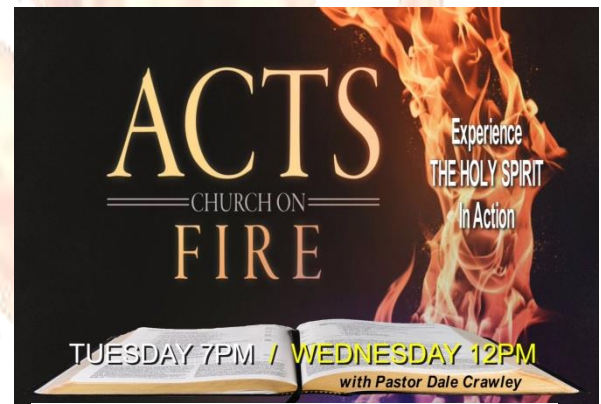


## ACTS 5 – Pt. 2 “The Holy Spirit and Unquenchable Fire!”

The verses we are about to read give us some insight into why the number of Christians continued to multiply. Luke the writer gives us representative facts, to describe the progress of the Gospel ... according to principles that are timeless and unchangeable. We also have here ... **a prescription for the gospel's advance** at any time and in any place. **READ ACTS 5:17-42**



October 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### **DANGER! TROUBLE AHEAD!** (Acts 5:17-18)

The apostles experienced power to do miracles, great boldness in preaching, and God's presence in their lives, yet they were not free from hatred and persecution. They were arrested, put in jail, beaten, and slandered by community leaders. Faith in God does not make troubles disappear; it makes troubles appear less frightening ... because it puts them in the right perspective. **Don't expect everyone to react favorably when you share something as dynamic as your faith in Christ.** Some will be jealous, afraid, or threatened. **Expect** some negative reactions, and remember ... **that you must be more concerned about serving God than about the reactions of people!** (see 5:29)

- **SPECIAL NOTE:** Acts 5:19, **“But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out ...”** The Sadducees deny that angels exist. Acts 23:8. **GOD WILL OFTEN USE WHAT YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN ... TO DO ... WHAT YOU THINK CANNOT BE DONE!**

### **COMMANDS THAT BRING CRISIS** (Acts 5:20)

The angel of the Lord gave the apostles a command that, when followed, would lead to a brutal beating. If that strikes you as odd, it is probably because of the prevailing idea among many believers is that obedience inevitably leads to blessing (*defined as "a problem-free, blissful existence"*). However, serious students of the Bible know, that obeying God often results in pain and suffering! They also recognize that being persecuted for Christ is a deeper kind of blessing.

### **AN UNSTOPPABLE WITNESS!** (Acts 5:21)

Suppose someone threatened to kill you if you didn't stop talking about God. You probably would be tempted to keep quiet. But consider the response of the apostles: after being threatened by powerful leaders, arrested, jailed, and miraculously released, they went right back to preaching. **This was nothing less than God's power working in and through them! (4:13)** When we are utterly convinced of the truth of Christ's resurrection ... and when we know intimately the presence and power of his Holy Spirit ... **WE WILL SPEAK OUT FOR CHRIST!**

## **OBEY HIM!** (Acts 5:29)

**Declaring their intent to obey God, the apostles proclaimed their priorities.** While believers should try to live at peace with everyone (Rom. 12:18) ... conflict with the world and its authorities is sometimes inevitable (John 15:18). Situations will come where we cannot obey God and please those in charge. At those times, we must obey God and trust His Word!

## **TELLING TRUTH** (Acts 5:32)

In both Luke and Acts, the Holy Spirit was clearly associated with witnessing. Almost every time the Spirit was mentioned ... someone testified about God or proclaimed the good news of Christ. **If we are filled with the Spirit** (Eph. 5:18), if we are letting Him lead us (Gal 5:16), we, too, will speak of Christ. **Think back over your conversations from the previous week ... If you realize that you rarely or never mentioned Christ to others ... it is a good sign that you are "stifling the Holy Spirit"** (1 Thess. 5:19).

***"We are not to preach sociology, but salvation ... not economics, but evangelism ... not reform, but redemption ... not culture, but conversion ... not progress, but pardon ... not a social order, but a new birth ... not revolution, but regeneration ... not renovation, but revival ... not resuscitation, but resurrection ... not a new organization, but a new creation ... not democracy, but the Gospel ... not civilization, but Christ ... we are ambassadors, not diplomats!" -- Hugh Thomsen Kerr***

## **FIGHTING AGAINST GOD?** (Acts 5:38-39)

Gamaliel presented some sound advice about reacting to religious movements. Unless disciples in these groups endorse obviously dangerous doctrines or practices, often it is wiser to be tolerant rather than repressive. **Sometimes only time will tell ... if they are merely the work of man ... or if God is trying to say something through them.** **The next time a person or a group promotes a differing way of religious practice or idea ... consider Gamaliel's advice ... just in case you "find yourself fighting against God!"**

## **SUFFERING FOR CHRIST** (Acts 5:40)

Peter and John were warned repeatedly not to preach, but they continued despite the threats. Believers today should also live as Christ has asked ... sharing the faith no matter what the cost! You may not be beaten or thrown in jail, but you may be ridiculed, ostracized, or slandered.

## **AN ANCIENT STRATEGY** (Acts 5:42)

The apostles taught from house to house. Home Bible studies are not new. As the believers needed to grow in their new faith, home Bible studies met their needs while introducing new people to the Christian faith. During later times of persecution, meeting in homes became the primary method of passing on Bible knowledge. Christians throughout the world still use this approach when under persecution. **Try meeting regularly in a small group with other believers ... IT IS WHERE GROWTH STILL HAPPENS!**