

Acts 5:15-42 - Every move we make should be in Him.

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As we work our way through the book of Acts, there will be times when we cannot simply draw out points verse by verse, but rather need to read a logical portion of the story and this morning we need to do that.

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So, we are going to read Acts 5:15-42 if you could turn there.

From the last time you might remember that we looked at Ananias and Sapphira and how they held back on God within their hearts in regard to the price of the land they had determined to sell. They kept some of the proceeds for themselves and while that would have been ok, what was not ok was that they told Peter that they were giving the FULL amount. What started in their hearts as a lie came out in their actions by lying to the Holy Spirit.

Hypocrisy is something that we see Jesus warning about time and time again in his dealings with the Pharisees and it is something that we also need to be on the lookout for in our own lives.

Jesus rightly said of these Pharisees that, this people honor me with their lips their heart is far away from me. Matt 15:8

Acts 5:12-42

12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

13 None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.

14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.

16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

17 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 and 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 Jesus as the Christ.

From this passage I want to draw out 3 points that I pray will be helpful for us this morning as we serve Jesus.

First

From verse 38 we see that the wise teacher of the Law, Gamaliel stood up and told the court to leave them alone to see whether or not in fact God was behind this.

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

The idea here is true of all genuine moves of God. If it is of God you will not be able to stop it, but if it is from us, then it will lose steam and die out.

We should never be ashamed to stop things that we know we have started in our own strength. They might have success for a while but they normally require an abnormal amount of work on our part to keep them going. That is a sure sign that God has moved on or was not in it in the first place.

The great danger for us is that we institutionalise the moves of God and try and contain and control them to the point where we take the very life of God out of the move and we are left with a monument to what was.

We can also do that personally as well. We can often get direction from God and then run way ahead of him thinking that we have all the direction we need. We make 5 and 10 year plans and desire in our hearts to something great for Him only to find out he hasn't moved with us.

The reason is that it is his plan and he will unfold it in his time as we simply laid down our agendas to take up his.

If we do this then I can guarantee that God will continue to move as we continue to follow.

Jesus said to his disciples follow me, not I will follow you. But many of us can get ourselves into all sorts of knots wondering where Jesus is when we are way out in front of him when we should have been behind him.

Second

How we handle suffering in our lives will be dependent on how we view the first point.

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.**

These believers were beaten by the authorities and what did they do?

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They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus.

If we are moving with God and not out in front trying to do something great for him (which often is not for him but for ourselves) then suffering in the work has the right context.

If we are out in front doing the stuff for God then when things don't go as planned and things fall apart and we suffer, we end up not rejoicing but blaming.

We blame God and say why are you doing this to me when I am trying to do so much for you?

But if we are moving with God then when we suffer setbacks or hardships we know that they are part of the growth process in our lives as well as an indication that God is moving and Satan is opposing.

Then we can rejoice.

Third

Finally we can learn that even though people, authorities and Satan will try to stop us from talking, we must disobey them and keep on speaking about Jesus.

42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

In the church there will be many distractions to talk about many things OTHER than about Jesus.

We can talk about our social programs, our relevant life enhancing messages, our great music, our great fellowship, but all of these are simply benefits of THE MESSAGE - which is JESUS.

Let's pray.