

Allegiance to a New King

Series: ROOTS

Brad Bailey – October 30, 2022

[Note: The notes below were too extensive to present fully. The initial portions in particular were only shared in part.]

Intro

Today...we are continuing in our series entitled ROOTS.

When we consider who we are... we can find ourselves more uncertain and unclear than we would hope to. Not just as individuals...but the same can be true for who we are a those being united with God through Christ... the church.

And so we are **returning to our roots...** that is... **to our spiritual family.**

The **Biblical Book of Acts** is **an account of how the spiritual family began.** It is an account of how the church began after Christ rose and ascended to heaven.

How that group of ordinary lives grew just as Jesus had said.

In them...we find our roots.

Like anyone who explores their roots... it not about their outer cultural styles...but their core nature.

Today...God speaks to us...through their courage to understand their allegiance to a new king.

Acts 5:12-21, 25-33, 40-42

The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. ¹⁵ As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. ¹⁶ Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. ¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. ²⁰ "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." ²¹ At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

So "When the high priest and his associates arrived..." they found the gates locked but no one inside... and the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were perplexed.

²⁵ Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." ²⁶ At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. ²⁷ Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." ²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom

you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." ³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

Then one of the religious leaders... who was respected... convinced the others to trust that if this group was of mere human origin...they would fail...and if they were of God...it would be in vain to try and stop them.

⁴⁰ His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

PRAYER: For many of us... family roots... a courage that could not be silenced...those wondering... defiance that speaks to what this world needs...

In this passage of Scripture... we have an account of how people were being drawn to the working of God... and how it threatened those who had positions of power. [1]

It becomes a testimony to the nature of allegiance that is part of the new family of God.

Luke describes how they were gathering regularly in the area known as **Solomon's portico**. It had not been built by Solomon, but was only named after him. It was to the Temple Mount what the Washington Monument is to the Capitol. Located in the outer court...the Court of the Gentiles. It consisted of a series of great massive pillars and covered areas which surrounded the temple structure. And this kind of specific is what reminds us that the writer is giving a very real accounting of what was happening.

Begins by telling us how... the deeds of the apostles were drawing people.

Those who had were witnesses of Christ... were moving in compassion and power. The people began to bring their sick and lay them... some even just hoping that Peter's shadow could pass over them. It doesn't say that any were healed in this way. But the belief was that the shadow of a good man could pass on some of his goodness and, they no doubt hoped, some of his healing power. [2]

Word got out, so that crowds from surrounding towns and villages began to bring those in need...into Jerusalem.

But now comes the reaction of others. As many of the people were drawn... those who were threatened by hearing of one being called the Christ... felt they must stop this work.

Acts 5:17-18

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

The whole of this group were the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin made up of "the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders." Israel had been a theocracy... a When Rome took control of this whole region... they initially allowed Judea a great deal of independence... they were answerable to Rome... but could govern their local matters under their own system.

The Sanhedrin and its president, the high priest, were granted almost exclusive control of the internal affairs of the nation. The Sanhedrin ruled by serving as a combination of judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government. Among all other powers, they were the Supreme Court in the theocracy of Israel. [3]

They had long presumed themselves to be serving God...but the people were never so sure...and God had long been at work without them.

God was bringing HIS KINGDOM... and instead of realizing it... they resisted it.

So they initially lock up these apostles... which refers to the direct witnesses of Christ. And something ironic comes into play. The Sadducees did not believe in angels. So there is some humorous irony here... that when the rulers who among other things had declared there was no life beyond death...and no angels... discover that the prison doors are locked but the apostles are gone... they get news that an angel had come and freed them.

The prisoners are released... and as they are freed...they are given a directive. In this case...they are not told to flee to another city...but to go right back to temple and continue sharing about Jesus.... The Christ.... The King of Kings.

Acts 5:20-21

"Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

They were not simply freed from something...but freed FOR something. That word "stand" is an interesting Greek word. It means: "to hold your ground," like a military command. They were to go, they were to hold their ground, they were to proclaim the message of life, which would be to proclaim the resurrection. And this they did.

And when they were found they were brought back before the whole Sanhedrin and the high priest... who confronts them saying:

"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." (Acts 5:28) [4]

And to this....

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." ³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

Herein lies the ultimate conflict.

**"We must obey God rather than men!
It is a declaration of allegiance.**

Allegiance to a new king.

- Jesus came... announcing, embodying, and inaugurating... the kingdom of God. Kingdom is the 'king's dome'... the sphere of his reign. Jesus is reclaiming God's reign.
- The result is a **clash with all that claims to be sovereign**... all that sets itself against the rule of God. [6]

They declare that God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior.

The word translated as prince also means "author" or "leader." Jesus is the rightful Sovereign of the universe... the sovereign... who has come to save. [5]

And to this they declare they "must obey God rather than men."

It's a moment of courage... of boldness.
It's a strength that we likely hear in different ways.
Some may feel uncomfortable... some pumped.

This is not simply about some general sense of boldness.

It is an allegiance that defies personality.
It is an allegiance that is rooted in realizing who truly reigns.
They didn't say "check out how bold we are..." they said... **"We are witnesses of these things."**

What things? The life, death, and resurrection by which God exalted Jesus.

The first thing God teaches us through them...is that...

1. Our allegiance is to exalting Christ...as Savior and eternal King.

What was the contention? What were they declaring?

It was about who Jesus was.

Acts 5:31, 42

³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

"Boldness, at least in this instance, is not red-faced passion or impenetrable extroversion. Rather, it has to do with speaking — which is not so much about how we speak, but in what we say about Jesus, even when we presume our hearers won't be happy with it. And this is the "boldness" to which we're called. To know Jesus and speak clearly about who he is. This is being Christian in a confusing culture. This is how we're called to live." - Jonathan Parnell [7]

This is the “freedom of speech” that matters most. It’s not about what you have a right to say...but what we have a responsibility to say. The apostles didn’t claim their right... but their responsibility.

Challenge to boldness being applied to every political and social issue.
There is a place to stand on one’s conviction...and that may differ among us... but I would caution us from becoming centered in anything more than the role of Christ.

I have read more about the polarizing political divides that are running through Christian culture than anyone I know... and I can appreciate the fears and the frustrations that people may have. What I can’t help but hearing is that Christian culture is ripe with contentions being made from both political sides...on various issues... but that not one contention was about who Jesus is... or even about Jesus.

I would encourage us to hear the testimony here from our roots.
They were not claiming any superiority in themselves.
They were not battling for power.
They would not be silent about one thing... declaring who Jesus was.

There are certainly matters that we should have convictions about... and we may need courage to speak out about them... but beware if your idea of Gospel news... isn’t centered in who Jesus is.

To declare that Jesus is Lord...is at the true center of God’s politics.
It means that he is the one who reigns above all.
It means that Ceasar is not Lord. It means that Donald Trump nor Joe Biden are Lord.
It defies all the powers that seek to rule this world.

2. Our allegiance is reflected in doing righteousness.

What were they doing that was creating a conflict?

Healing the sick and sharing the good news of who Christ was.

Jesus told His followers,

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. -- Matthew 5:10-11

The Scriptures include what the apostle Peter says...

1 Peter 4:15-16 (GNT)

If you suffer, it must not be because you are a murderer or a thief or a criminal or a meddler in other people's affairs. However, if you suffer because you are a Christian, don't be ashamed of it, but thank God that you bear Christ's name.

Clearly we should understand that there are reactions that be due to our responsibility... BUT ...there can be those which are inevitable because of bearing Christ.

3. Our allegiance is to embrace disgrace.

Acts 5:41

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

These words may sound hard to imagine. [9]

There was real humiliation. They were flogged ... whipped like one might brutally whip an animal.

While none of us is likely to face being flogged... we may fear the potential to be flogged by the way others speak about us. There may be some dominating figures in our families or friends or work spaces... who want to denounce any idea that there is a higher authority than themselves...who feel a need to flog with their words.

We do well to remember those who had grasped that there is a reason to rejoice when suffering disgrace for the Name. If it is for the sake of believing that he dies for us...and was raised up show God reigns over all...then it is a matter of sharing in the disgrace by which he bore our shame and saved us. [8]

As the writer of the Biblical Book of Hebrews explains...

We do well to embrace the disgrace that comes from joining the crucified Christ.

Hebrews 13:11-14 (NLT)

Under the old system, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, and the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. ¹² So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by means of his own blood. ¹³ So let us go out to him, outside the camp, and bear the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.

In the ancient Jewish world, the “The high priest,” verse 11, “carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp.” The people understood this. They took the bodies of the beasts outside of the camp, because they were symbolic of all of the sin that had been laid upon them. And so, he says, it is in account of this that Jesus also suffered outside the city gate. Remember that his cross was raised outside the city wall.

Jesus took the disgrace of this world upon himself.

And the writer says, **“Let us ... go to him outside the camp.”**

We are called to join the King who is outside the city gates.

This outside place was originally unclean and defiled because it's where the animal carcasses were burned, but now it becomes pure and holy—all because of Jesus Christ. Today, God's people are called to join Christ outside the city gate, to bear the disgrace that he bore (v. 13). We are called to become outsiders ourselves, leaving our own desires and loves and comforts to walk outside of the walls in our lives to love all of God's people. There... outside...in the place of shame... God went... and there he met us. It is there we go... there where we can offer hope to the sinners and shamed...

When those first followers embraced disgrace.... It revealed a world that no longer is under the powers of this world... a space where dignity comes from God and not man.

PERSONAL: I have never suffered any great amount of disgrace... but when I first began to speak of my belief in Jesus... and his sacrificial work to save us... I knew then...and I know now... there is a reaction... an inevitable reaction.

I didn't like it when I was young...and I don't like it now.

But I have come to know that there is something in the reaction that connects me to Jesus... to the king who was sent outside the city.

My allegiance is to embrace disgrace.

And as the writer of Hebrew explains... this is not what will last.

For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. (Heb. 13:14)

All the ways we try to find security and significance here... will not last. [10]

This leads to a final point....

4. Our allegiance will triumph in the end.

This is not some simplistic wishful thinking. It is at the very heart of what Jesus understood...and came to impart.

It's become popular to try and take the virtues of Jesus as vital...but to set his view on eternity aside.

But that was at the heart of how he lived. He entered this current state of the created world...and engaged it unlike any other...because he understood that it was not this state would not last... and that there was an eternal kingdom with which this world will be reconciled. That is why he was free from the powers of this world. That is why he was exalted. That is why we can know that our allegiance will triumph in the end.

This is the way in which Jesus has led us.

Jesus calls us to follow him... to enter into a kingdom that is everlasting.

CLOSING:

To those who are just beginning to explore what is at the heart of the Christian faith... hear that which this world needs.

One who transcends the power of this world.

Look to the sky... power...look within... love.

Look at the one who takes our shame.

The greatest deception we live under... may be that of thinking that we are merely free people who don't serve anyone... we may even believe that if we choose to acknowledge any god... they are lucky to have us join their religion.

If we could see clearly... we are at best more like prisoners of war... who willingly chose our captor.

The true king has defeated those powers. He waits only for our choice...our allegiance. What will you do?

To those who have accepted Christ... call to embrace the allegiance that is a part of our roots.

Maybe you realize you have become afraid of sharing your allegiance.

Maybe God is speaking to you through the words of those who declared: "We must obey God rather than men."

Maybe it's time to make an internal shift... to embracing the awkwardness of having a different commitment than others around you.

At some point we must decide if we are a **thermometer... who just adjusts to the elements around us.... or a thermostat which is set from within.**

At some point we **will ALL come to such a crossroads.**

We all have an audience to which we live out life. We may want everyone we value to share the same choicebut we need to begin with our own commitment.

Notes:

1. It is notable that this same conflict and stand is found in Acts chapter 4. See: Acts 4 and 5: Similar Narratives with Distinct Emphases, JANUARY 15, 2021 BY PETER KROL - [here](#)
2. Even today some people in the Orient superstitiously believe that a person's shadow carries his power. Eastern parents have pulled their children away from the shadow of a wicked person and thrust them into the shadow of an honored individual.
3. Zondervan notes: "In A.D. 6...when Judea was made a Roman province, the Sanhedrin and its president, the high priest, were granted almost exclusive control of the internal affairs of the nation...It is during the period of the Roman procurators (A.D. 6-66) that the Sanhedrin came to possess the greatest power and jurisdiction of its history, although the Jewish authority was always ultimately answerable to the Roman governor." The Sanhedrin ruled by serving as a combination of judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government.
4. They are angry that they were putting his blood on them....yet that is exactly what they said they understood when Pilate washed his hands and the "whole people" say: "His blood be upon us and on our children." (Matthew 27:25)
5. Prince is the same word Peter used in 3:15, when he told the Jews that they had put to death the Prince of life.
6. It's natural that these ordinary lives were amazed that Jesus had chosen them...and we know that at times perhaps they thought that they would be part of the popular and powerful. But Jesus warned that what he bears will bring us into conflict. [2]

Matthew 10:17-18 (NLT)

Beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. ¹⁸You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.

How strange his words must have sounded. Yet how prophetic they proved to be. For this is just what was now unfolding for these followers.

They would face harsh reaction from both religious rulers and Roman rulers. Before 70 AD Nero would take local power and his persecution remains as brutal as any... ultimately burning much of Jerusalem.

7.Resource: Live Bold by Jonathan Parnell, JUNE 5, 2013 - [here](#)

8. Paul suffered more than most for Jesus' sake. He said this to the Christians at Phillipi: "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him"

([Philippians 1:29](#)). The word *granted* here means "shown favor, given freely as a gift." Paul does not present suffering as a curse, but as a benefit.

9. Drew here in part from: The Privilege of Disgrace by Alistair Begg (on Hebrews 13:5-14) - [here](#); and What Hebrews 13 Teaches Us About Being Outsiders By Chuck Armstrong, November 13, 2019 [here](#).

Alistair Begg writes, "It's a paradoxical statement, is it not? Everybody would regard disgrace as disgraceful. How could disgrace ever be a privilege? Well, Moses knew it was a privilege. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, because he knew it was a great privilege to be named with God's people."^[19] Daniel suffered the disgrace and ignominy, having come from a stellar background—the disgrace of ending up in jail, the disgrace of being thrown around in front of lions, the disgrace of being regarded as the offscouring of humanity.^[20] Paul, a guy with a great background, and a great mind, and great degrees, and great teachers, and great influence, is regarded as the "scum of the earth."^[21] He said, "It's a privilege." "It's a privilege." And the writer says, "Listen, I want you to understand that it *is* a privilege." – From: The Privilege of Disgrace by Alistair Begg (on Hebrews 13:5-14) - [here](#)

10. These things all were part and parcel of the things that were "shaken" at the end of chapter 12: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful."^[Hebrews 12:28] God is going to shake the heavens. He's going to shake the earth. And so we are looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God."^[Hebrews 11:10 (NLT).]