



ALL SAINTS

PREBYTERIAN

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

"A Beautiful Antithesis" | Rev. Josh Keller | June 20, 2021

Acts 5:27-35, 38-42

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... **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 that the Christ is Jesus.

Matthew 10:16-22

Key Points and Discussion Questions from Josh's Sermon:

Introductory Discussion

Open in prayer. Read the passage from Acts. Discuss: In what ways do you identify with the experience of religious persecution described in this passage? In what ways is it difficult for you to identify? How do you feel about the courage the Apostles displayed?

Questions for Discussion based on Josh's Sermon Outline.

- Josh suggests the foundation for the apostles' courage stems from two things: 1) their principles and 2) their hope.
 - Do you agree/disagree?
 - Do you see one of these factors as being more important than the other? Or do they both work together? How so?
- Josh suggests that the essence of the gospel is expressed in the conjoinment of verses 30 and 31. What did he mean by that?
- Just for fun: Read the passage in Matthew (at left) and reflect on the speech Peter gives here. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being "follows Jesus' Matthew 10 exhortation the best," how would you rate Peter's speech? How do you see Peter's personality reflected in his speech?
- Peter frames the choices available to himself and the apostles very starkly: "We must obey God rather than men?"
 - What has God commanded them to do? (Read Acts 1:8-9)
 - What are men commanding them to do in this passage?
 - What are the consequences of disobeying God here for the apostles? What is at stake?
 - What are the consequences of disobeying these men?
 - How do you feel about the choices the apostles made?
- Josh suggests both the Jewish leaders and the apostles are both acting on their core principles but that their behaviors are antithetical.
 - Compare/contrast the reactions of each group to having their principles challenged. What's the same? What's different?
 - What factors do you see are at work here to make the responses so distinct?
- Josh suggests that ultimately hope was the reason that Peter and the apostles could face persecution and obey God with joy and peace.
 - Read the passage at left in Romans about hope.
 - How is hope produced?
 - Is it possible for Christian hope to be produced apart from suffering? Why or why not?
- Josh explains that Christian hope is not about blindly "wishing for the best"; but instead it is the confident expectation of God's provision in the future based on all He's done in the past.
 - At a macro level: How does this principle of Christian hope play out in the shared history of the Universal church? What historical precedent do we have for believing that great blessings can come through awful, torturous experiences?
 - At a micro/personal level: How have you seen this principle - "trusting God now because of what God has taken you

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. **17** Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, **18** and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. **19** When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. **20** For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. **21** Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, **22** and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

through in the past” - hold true in your life? Beginning with those who have been Christians for the longest time in your group and working towards the youngest, share one personal story in your past that gives you hope for your present or your future.

Closing Discussion/Prayer: Where do you need courage, now?

In our culture, it seems rare to find situations as starkly black and white as that which Peter and the apostles are facing here.

- Are you experiencing anything like that in your life right now?
- If not, what is the most likely area in your life right now where you feel the call/command of God and the call/command of man are in direct conflict? In other words, if you had to name one thing/area requiring courage to stand on God's principles at the risk of suffering, what would it be?
- Take a moment to pray for each person as they share an area where they need courage right now to act with Christian hope on God's principles.