

In the Fire

Acts 5 NKJV

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. **13** Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. **14** And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, **15** so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. **16** Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, **18** and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. **19** But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, **20** "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, **23** saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"

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25 So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, **28** saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”

29 But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

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33 When they heard *this*, they were furious and plotted to kill them.

34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. **35** And he said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.

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38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;

39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

- Peter was a fisherman before Christ found him...
- It seems that Peter was a little hot headed and quick to speak when Jesus called him...
- I bet Peter was one who understood trouble and I bet he knew what taking a scolding felt like before this happened...
- But there is a major difference here...
- Peter did not suffering here because of his misconduct...

- Peter suffered here because of his obedience to God...
- The word beating is also translated skinned.
- The beating they received stripped the skin off of their backs.

“It was no soft option; people were known to die from it, even if this was exceptional. It was meant to be a serious lesson to offenders.”
(Marshall)

- I believe that this beating was different from the ones Peter experienced in the past...
- This time Jesus was present...
- There was another in the Fire with them that day...

Vs. 41

So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

- On that day Peter and the other Apostles didn't rejoice because they delighted in pain...
- They rejoiced because their pain was a direct result of their obedience to God...

Story: Preaching in the Jungle of Mexico

1 Peter 1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, **2** who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

- The Apostle Peter is speaking to believers who are scattered all over...
- They are scattered for different reasons but one is because of persecution...
- Some of these Christians are new in the Lord...
- When the churches received this letter from Peter it was a big deal and these letters would travel and be shared between different churches...
- These letters each had a purpose...
- Often these letters or Epistles were a written answer to a question or a series of questions.
- Other times like in this Epistle from Peter, he is writing with one main purpose and that is to encourage these believers who are enduring suffering for the name of Jesus.

One thing that stands out to me about these believers:

1. **They Loved Jesus** (*Vs. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,*)
2. **They were on fire and spreading the message where ever they went**
3. **They were obedient**

Vs. 3

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope...

Vs. 4

and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

When I think of the early NT Church I don't think of people who were bummed out and depressed...

It seems to me that they were full of life...

Full of the Spirit and Passion for Jesus...

The Persecuted Church didn't shrink back...

Rather the Early Persecuted Church grew under Social, Religious and Governmental oppression...

Vs. 6,7

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

- Peter encourages them...
- These Trials have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed....
- He likens it to the Gold that is refined in the fire...

1 Peter 4:1

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.

Peter encourages the Church with three things:

1. Be Holy

Vs. 13-16

13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. **14** As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires

you had when you lived in ignorance. **15** But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; **16** for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Peter is saying:

- There is Victory in your Consecration...
- Power comes from His Presence...
- Now is not the time for compromise...
- Now is not the time to be intoxicated with the world and asleep...
- He says be alert and fully sober...
- Holy Obedience is a shield of Fire...

Romans 12

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Ephesians 4

26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** and do not give the devil a foothold.

Ephesians 6

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, **15** and with your **feet fitted with the readiness** that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

18 And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

2. Your Chosen by God

1 Peter 2

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

3. Your Called to be Different

1 Peter 2

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

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15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

Closing Song:

In Persecution or Difficulty

1. Maintain Your Walk - Be Holy
2. Maintain Your Witness - Your Called to be Different
3. Don't Forget who you are - Your Chosen by God

1 Peter 4

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. **14** If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **15** If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. **16** However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.