

5-Day Devotional: Standing Firm for the Name of Jesus

Day 1: Unwavering Obedience in the Face of Opposition

Reading: Acts 5:17-32

Devotional: The apostles faced imprisonment for preaching Jesus, yet when freed by an angel, they immediately returned to the temple to continue teaching. Their obedience wasn't conditional on comfort or safety—it was absolute. The angel's command was simple: "Go and tell the people all about this life." They didn't negotiate, rationalize, or delay.

Consider your own obedience to God's call. Do you retreat when following Christ becomes uncomfortable? The apostles teach us that true discipleship means doing what God commands regardless of consequences. Their declaration rings through the ages: "We must obey God rather than people." Today, identify one area where you've compromised obedience for comfort. What would unwavering faithfulness look like in that situation? God's commands aren't suggestions—they're invitations to participate in His kingdom work.

Day 2: What God Deems Important vs. What the World Values

Reading: Matthew 6:19-34

Devotional: The religious leaders were filled with jealousy because crowds gathered around the apostles. They valued control, reputation, and religious power. The apostles valued one thing: advancing the name of Jesus. This contrast exposes a question we all must answer: What do I deem important?

We live in a culture obsessed with trends, comfort, and acceptance. We sacrifice spiritual disciplines for social approval. We prioritize recreation over worship, financial security over generosity, and worldly success over kingdom impact. Jesus asks us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness. This isn't about adding God to our priorities—it's about making Him the priority around which everything else orbits.

Examine your calendar and bank statement. They reveal what you truly value. Are you living for what God deems important or what culture celebrates? Make one concrete adjustment this week that aligns your life with kingdom priorities.

Day 3: Rejoicing in Persecution

Reading: James 1:2-12; 1 Peter 4:12-19

Devotional: After being flogged—a brutal punishment involving 39 lashes that tore flesh from bone—the apostles left "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the name." This response defies human logic. They celebrated suffering.

Most of us face mere breezes of persecution compared to their storms: awkward conversations, social rejection, missed opportunities. Yet we retreat rather than rejoice. We've forgotten that persecution is a mark of authenticity. It proves we're living differently enough to be noticed.

The apostles understood something profound: suffering for Jesus is a privilege, not a punishment. It means you've been counted worthy to share in His sufferings. When you face opposition for your faith—whether losing friends, facing workplace discrimination, or enduring mockery—don't retreat in shame. Rejoice. You're in good company.

This week, if you experience any resistance for following Christ, pause and thank God for counting you worthy.

Day 4: God's Sovereign Control in Our Battles

Reading: Daniel 3:8-30

Devotional: When the Sanhedrin wanted to kill the apostles, God raised up Gamaliel—a respected Pharisee with no allegiance to Jesus—to counsel restraint. This wasn't coincidence; it was divine intervention. God positioned an influential voice exactly when His people needed protection.

Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego facing the furnace, the apostles stood before hostile authorities. Both stories reveal the same truth: God orchestrates circumstances for His purposes and His people's protection. He places the right people in the right positions at the right time.

You may feel overwhelmed by opposition or circumstances beyond your control. Remember: nothing catches God by surprise. He's sovereign over every detail, working all things for the good of those who love Him. Your job isn't to control outcomes—it's to remain faithful.

Where do you need to trust God's control today? Surrender that situation to Him, recognizing His hand is already at work in ways you cannot see.

Day 5: The Motivation for Obedience

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Philippians 2:1-11

Devotional: The cross must be more than an annual Easter remembrance—it must be our daily motivation. The apostles didn't endure persecution out of duty or fear, but because of what Christ had done for them. The love of Christ compelled them forward.

We often approach Christian living as obligation: I should read my Bible, I should serve, I should give. This produces guilt-driven religion, not gospel-centered transformation. True obedience flows from gratitude for the cross. When we grasp what Christ endured for us—the ultimate persecution, the ultimate suffering—our small sacrifices pale in comparison.

What are you willing to do for the name of Jesus? Not because you have to, but because He first loved you. Not to earn salvation, but because you've been saved.

The cross changes everything. It transforms persecution from something to avoid into something worth celebrating.

Spend time today meditating on the cross. Let the reality of Christ's sacrifice fuel your obedience, shape your priorities, and embolden your witness. Then ask:

Because of what Jesus did for me, what am I willing to do for His name?