



Acts

Amplifying Hope | October 22, 2023

Sermon: Opposition to the Truth

Scripture: Acts 11:1-18; 12:1-25

Summary: Jesus faced opposition from religious leaders. The reason for the opposition is as old as Satan's rebellion and individual sin. When people choose anything over truth, obedience and worship, they oppose truth. The truth of God's perfect creation, revealed will and eternal plan. No matter what strategy or style of faith sharing is used, no matter what part of the world, those who share their faith in truth are likely to encounter opposition and outright rejection. The message of the Gospel is that God created everyone and His plan is for those He loves and who love Him to have a relationship with Him forever. Sin cuts off the relationship and only in Jesus is it possible for the relationship to be restored. Authentic, real, eternal relationship with God originates with Him and continues with complete repentance, total surrender, ongoing dependence and unlimited obedience. Opposition to the truth comes from those unwilling to surrender to God's sovereign will.

1. Religiously legalistic people who value tradition over God's will stand in opposition to the truth. (Acts 11:1-3).

- Jesus is the truth

2. Witnesses tell the truth of what is known from experience. (Acts 11:4-18)

- Experience comes from the Word and the work

- *Experience*: practical contact with and observation of facts or events

3. God is sovereign over all things, including His witnesses. (Acts 12:1-4)

- Tale of Two Apostles: James and Peter

4. Prayer is critically important in the face of opposition (Acts 12:5-23).

- Peter's rescue
- Rhoda's recognition
- Disciple's reaction
- Herrod's rejection

5. Increasing and Multiplying (Acts 12:24).

Life Application Questions

1. Have you ever participated in a mission trip? Describe where you went and what you did. What was it like sharing your faith on a mission trip?
2. How is sharing faith on a mission trip different from sharing faith at home?
3. What steps could be taken to actively share faith at home? Are there elements of a mission trip that could work at home and increase faith sharing?
4. What role does prayer play in your life? What role could prayer have in your faith sharing?
5. How should believers/witnesses handle opposition and rejection of the truth?
6. Does it seem that the word is increasing and multiplying in the region where you live? In what ways? What could be done through obedience, to share faith with greater frequency and effectiveness?

7. PRAY: May the truth of the Gospel be shared with all in your region and that you would be part of the increase.

God's providence is *individual*; that is, His providential plan for everyone is personal. God's providence for James included death. God's providence for Peter included deliverance. That is the mystery of God's providence. God loved both James and Peter. God's love was expressed in James's death as much as in Peter's deliverance. Whatever God permits in your life, remember that it is an evidence of God's love for you. The Bible says that God loves you with an everlasting love ([Jer. 31:3](#)), and He will never stop loving you ([Rom. 8:38, 39](#)). So whatever happens, remember His love.

In both of these individual plans, we see God's wisdom at work. We don't understand and will have to wait until heaven to learn why it was God's will for James to go to heaven at that time and for Peter to go later. But we do know that God is wise in all of His dealings. He is too loving to be unkind. He is too wise to be unwise. God's wisdom is expressed in His individual dealings with us.

Also note that God would get the glory in the situation. God was glorified in the death of James. He was glorified in the deliverance of Peter.

We also learn that God's will is *gradual*, unfolding. Herod had just spoken the word, and a good man was executed. Herod seemed to be doing pretty well, and God was letting him slide. It looked as though somehow in God's providence and plan, Herod was getting away with murder—literally. But God suddenly struck him down ([Acts 12:23](#)). The Lord had enough of it. In the providence of God, sometimes the returns aren't all in. The wheels of God's judgment may grind slowly, but they grind surely. Sooner or later judgment always falls. God's providence is also *testimonial*: "But the word of God grew and multiplied" (12:24).

Vines Expository Bible Notes

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