**Worthy to Suffer**

**Lesson 17: Acts 5:12-42**

**Introduction:**

After the account of discipline applied to Ananias and Sapphira, we see the church experience growth. But with this growth comes persecution.

**Text:** Acts 5:12-42

**Body:**

1. **Growth Follows Discipline** (Verses 12-16) **Verse 12** Acts 5:12 “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.” NKJV The apostles regularly performed miracles to convince the Jews of the truth of the Christian message. (Mark 16:20) “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” NKJV (Hebrews 2:3-4) “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” NKJV The early church would meet in Solomon’s portico. [60’ x 1,000’] **Verse 13** Acts 5:13 “Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.” NKJV Seemingly what had happened to Ananias and Sapphira kept some from being added to the church but overall it helped the church. Even unbelievers respected the Christians. **Verses 14-16** Acts 5:14-16 “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 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. 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.” NKJV

Many Jews did respond to the gospel despite Satan’s attempt to hurt the church. The apostles’ popularity had spread. They healed “all” that came. No one was turned away. Note: The way to spread Christianity today is to be Christian. Be people of honesty, integrity, character, generosity, and sincerity.

1. **Persecution Follows Growth** (Verses 17-42) **Verses 17-18** Acts 5:17-18 “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, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.” NKJV The Sadducees were jealous of the apostles’ popularity and influence. They wanted to wipe out this new movement because the Sadducees wanted to keep their power. The apostles were put in prison and treated as common criminals. Note: Faith in God doesn’t make our troubles disappear. We must be more concerned about serving God than we are about people’s reactions. **Verses 19-20** Acts 5:19-20 “But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, ‘Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’ ” NKJV An angel freed the apostles and told them to proclaim the message of life. (John 6:68) “But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” NKJV The irony is that the Sadducees didn’t even believe in angels! **Verse 21** Acts 5:21 “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.” NKJV The apostles obeyed immediately. What they did was dangerous and illegal. The high priest gathered the entire Sanhedrin to have the apostles brought to them from prison. **Verses 22-24** Acts 5:22-24 “But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 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!’ Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be.” NKJV

The high priest and the officials were perplexed, at a loss. They couldn’t explain what had happened. It was a locked-room mystery! **Verse 25** Acts 5:25 “So one came and told them, saying, ‘Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!’ ” NKJV The officials probably could not believe what they were hearing. They figured the apostles would have left town. But they were only a few hundred feet away. **Verse 26** Acts 5:26 “Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.” NKJV The apostles offered no resistance. They could have started a riot; but they didn’t. This was similar to Jesus’ arrest. (I Peter 2:23) “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God.” NKJV **Verses 27-28** Acts 5:27-28 “And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 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!’ ” NKJV The apostles were rebuked for not obeying their orders. The high priest wouldn’t even mention Jesus’ name. They were sick of it. The apostles had filled the city with their teaching. What a compliment! Note: Christians today need to do the same. Recall the words of the Jews at Jesus’ crucifixion. (Matthew 27:24-25) “When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent to the blood of this just Person. You see to it.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ ” NKJV **Verse 29** Acts 5:29 “But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’ ” NKJV We must obey God. Jehovah is always the highest authority and rules in the highest court. Never compromise your faith. (Luke 6:22) “Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man’s sake.” NKJV **Verse 30** Acts 5:30 “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.” NKJV The God who had parted the Red Sea was the same God who had raised Jesus from the dead. The Jewish Council was condemned for having put Him to death. **Verse 31** Acts 5:31 “Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” NKJV Jesus was exalted by God and given the highest honor. Calling Him “Savior” would have infuriated the Council. Through His death He can offer repentance and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38) “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” NKJV Israel needed these. **Verse 32** Acts 5:32 “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.” NKJV The Holy Spirit witnessed these facts by enabling the apostles to perform miracles. Today, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we should be speaking about Christ as the apostles did. **Verses 33-34** Acts 5:33-34 “When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 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.” NKJV The Council’s Response: They were furious with rage. A respected Pharisee, Gamaliel, spoke up – one wise voice. **Verses 35-37** Acts 5:35-37 “And he said to them: ‘Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.” NKJV “Take care” Stop and think about what you are doing. Revolutions come and revolutions go. **Verses 38-39** Acts 5:38-39 “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; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to fight against God.” NKJV Sound advice: Leave them alone! Do not use violence to suppress error. God wants us to oppose error with the truth. It is possible that Saul/Paul, a student of Gamaliel, was present to hear these words. **Verse 40** Acts 5:40 “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.” NKJV Instead of killing the apostles, they had them flogged! (Deuteronomy 25:2-3) “then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.” NKJV The Council no doubt hoped this would end the movement. Remember the prophecy of Mark 13:9. “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.” NKJV **Verses 41-42** Acts 5:41-42 “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” NKJV The Response: They rejoiced! (Matthew 5:10-12) “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” NKJV One of the apostles, Peter, would later write. (I Peter 4:12-16) “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s maters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” NKJV Suffering made them more courageous. They kept telling the Good News.

**Conclusion:**

Trials and suffering serve a purpose.

(I Peter 1:6-7) “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” NKJV Persecution is a part of life for the faithful child of God.

Bobby Stafford August 2, 2015 [Evening] Lesson 17: Acts 5:12-42