



Week #3: The Persecution of the Church

...“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name. Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood on us!” But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than people. The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus, whom you seized and killed by hanging him on a tree.”

Acts 5:28-30 (NET)

“God exalted him to his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these events, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.”

Now when they heard this, they became furious and wanted to execute them.

Acts 5:31-33 (NET)

- Your _____ doesn’t change with your _____.

But a Pharisee whose name was Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the council and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time. Then he said to the council, “Men of Israel, pay close attention to what you are about to do to these men. For sometime ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and about 400 men joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and nothing came of it. After him Judas the Galilean arose in the days of the census and incited people to follow him in revolt. He too was killed, and all who followed him were scattered. So in this case I say to you, stay away from these men and leave them alone because if this plan or this undertaking originates with people,

it will come to nothing, but if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them, or you may even be found fighting against God.” He convinced them, and they summoned the apostles and had them beaten. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them.

Acts 5:34-40 (NET)

- Your _____ doesn’t change when _____.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1 (NIV)

So they left the council rejoicing because they had been considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. And every day both in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 5:41-42 (NET)

- Your _____ can’t be _____ if it comes from God.

What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31 (NET)

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever encountered opposition or difficulty because of your faith? What has that experience been like?
2. When you think of the word “persecution”, what comes to mind? When you think of millions of Christians around the world experiencing persecution or discrimination because of their faith, what do you think your response can or should be?
3. What do you think your calling is? What do you think your assignment is?

Recommended Resources

- Open Doors International: www.opendoors.org
- International Christian Concern: www.persecution.org
- [Acts for Everyone, Part 1](#), by N.T. Wright
- [The Challenge of Acts: Rediscovering What the Church Was and Is](#), by N.T. Wright

(NET) New English Translation

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- Your mission doesn’t change with your circumstances.

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said to the council, “Men of Israel, pay close attention to what you are about to do to these men. For sometime ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and about 400 men joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and nothing came of it. After him Judas the Galilean arose in the days of the census and incited people to follow him in revolt. He too was killed, and all who followed him were scattered. So in this case I say to you, stay away from these men and leave them alone because if this plan or this undertaking originates with people, it will come to nothing, but if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them, or you may even be found fighting against God.” He convinced them, and they summoned the apostles and had them beaten. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them.

Acts 5:34-40 (NET)

- Your calling doesn’t change when things get difficult.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1 (NIV)

So they left the council rejoicing because they had been considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. And every day both in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 5:41-42 (NET)

- Your assignment can’t be stopped if it comes from God.

What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31 (NET)

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever encountered opposition or difficulty because of your faith? What has that experience been like?
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