

MAN'S Charge

Acts 5:19-20

1

19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, **20** "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

Sometimes the dynamics of the times shortly following the crucifixion of Jesus gets pushed to the side in our understanding of what was going on. There was a time when my son-in-law was hunting in the high country above Fresno when a bear confronted him, pawing at the ground, huffing, and even rearing up on its hind legs to frighten him. It worked, by the way. But that bear wasn't being violently aggressive to him; it was protecting its cubs that he had been watching down the hill. He understood the dynamic of what was occurring, which explained the bears reactions towards him, and he didn't shoot. Keep in mind that when Christ came on the scene and began teaching, this was all very new to the Jews. It is easy for us to fall into the common reaction of saying they just should have accepted what He was saying. Do we? When we are approached with an idea that is different from what we have accepted as right, how do we react? Try talking politics, especially in todays heated atmosphere, or religious beliefs, or racial issues, and what you will find is that people, that's us, resist difference and change with most every part of our being. Why would we think that the Jews were any different? They weren't. Most of them resisted Christ and His teaching with everything they had. Even after His crucifixion and so many had chosen to believe, the resistance was everywhere. Note the discussion when the Apostles are recaptured and brought back before the council...

Acts 5:27-28

2

27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, **28** saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

The high priest says...

3

"We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name"

They had been ordered to not teach Christ, fascinating that these people thought that they could suppress the will of God. Isn't that what we see in the verses we read that precede this? The angel of God tells the Apostles...

4

"Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

This form of persecution was what the Church was facing from the Jews, and as understandable as their reaction might be, it was the wrong reaction to have. The leaders of the Jews wanted nothing more than for the followers of Christ to just ne quiet and go away. That was their

commandment to them, “quit teaching in this name.” Note the attitude that precipitated this statement to the Apostles...

Acts 5:17

5

17 But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

Have you ever wondered just what the source of this jealousy was? The preceding verses tell us...

Acts 5:12-16

6

12 At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. **13** But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. **14** And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, **15** to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. **16** Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

So, was it the great esteem that the people held the Apostles in, the fact that the people were coming to them, or maybe it was that the Apostles wielded a power from God that did many signs and wonders including healing and casting out demons.

The word translated “jealousy” here comes from the Greek...

Zelos (dzay'-los); (NT:2205)

7

Means; properly, heat, i.e. (figuratively) "zeal" (in a favorable sense, ardor; in an unfavorable one, jealousy, as of a husband [figuratively, of God], or an enemy, malice):

KJV - emulation, envy (-ing), fervent mind, indignation, jealousy, zeal.

I find this interesting, the same Greek word that is translated as “zeal” is also translated as “Malice” or “indignity.” The idea behind the word speaks far more to the motivation or attitude of it. It is defined as “heat,” an agitation of things. That’s what happens when things get hot, their cells becomes agitated causing the sensation of heat. That’s what this word means, an agitation of our makeup causing us to be zealous, fervent, jealous, or indignant, all of these ideas, though maybe different in how they are used today all speak to the idea of being stirred up, whether in a good way or not.

The priests and Sadducees were stirred up, and not in a good way, against Christ, His Apostles, and the teaching He left them to do. That stirring up manifested itself in them as jealousy. They wanted all of the things that they saw happening with the Apostles. They wanted people to hold them in high regard, they wanted people to come to them, they wanted the power to heal. But this is where they just didn’t get it. They failed to understand that none of these things were ever about the Apostles. It was never about elevating them into positions of authority, though they had authority...

Matt 16:19

8

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

It was never about them having power, though they had power...

Acts 1:7-8

9

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; **8** but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

That's what the Pharisees, Sadducees, priests never understood. They always wanted the preeminence, the glory rather than to try and help the people. This brings us full circle back to the passage we started with...

10

Acts 5:19-20

11

19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, **20** "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

There are some thoughts from this that I would like to discuss with the remainder of our time.

12

1) God uses men to spread the Gospel, not angels

The angel of the Lord opened the prison door and set the Apostles free, but he didn't preach to the people. He might give the ministers their deployment orders, but he had no charge to preach himself. Obviously, the angels would have been more than capable of bringing the Gospel to man in its truth and purity, but that wasn't God's plan.

Heb 2:5

13

5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

Christ chose 12 men to carry the good news of the Gospel to the world...

Mark 16:15

14

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Those 12 became the catalyst, the beginning of the spread of the Gospel, men teaching men about the man who was God and yet gave himself for man, so that man could be saved.

Why men? Because that was God's plan.

15

2) Men are to teach men

We even see in this passage a hint at the manner in which this is to happen. The angel says...

16

“GO”

Remember the commandment that had been given to the Apostles?

17

“Don’t speak in this name again”

The Apostles had an answer to what they had been commanded...

Acts 5:29-32

18

29 But Peter and the apostles answered, ***“We must obey God rather than men.”*** **30** The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. **31** He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. **32** And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

What a beautiful, powerful, yet simplistic statement of faith that they make here in the face of persecution...

19

“We must obey God rather than men”

So, based on their faith, founded on their faith, they went. They went so that others could hear the word and have the opportunity to be saved. They went to preach...

Mark 16:15-16

20

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. **16** He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

They went and preached the Gospel, the message. This is our next point...

21

3) The nature of the message

22

20 "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

The message being taught is the "Message of Life."

Therein is the point. The Gospel isn't just a history, though it is a history, it isn't like teaching the facts of math or geography, though it is loaded with essential facts, it isn't just philosophy or the arts, though each and every one of these things are included in it, no, the Gospel is a way of life. It incorporates all of the above, plus so much more into a way of life, a way of eternal life.

Paul talks of this in...

Gal 2:20

23

20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

The Gospel is, or at least should be, a life changing force. It is intended to mold those who profess to follow it.

Rom 12:1-2

24

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The message of life, God's will, can be that transforming agent in our lives that renews us to an acceptable service of worship when we present ourselves, our bodies, to God as a living sacrifice. Now note what Paul says in...

Phil 3:20-21

25

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Our teaching, if we are true to Christ and His Word, will be not only a doctrine, but a life. The high priest understood this; what was it he said...

26

"You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

The King James translates that as...

27

"Doctrine"

He may just as well have said...

28

"You fill Jerusalem with this way of life"

What are the "words of this life"? What is this "message of life?"

Acts 5:40-42

29

40 They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. **41** So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. **42** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

There is only one avenue to life. There is only path that can lead to life. That is what we need to teach and that is what we need to live. Anything else, everything else, leads away from God towards death. **30**

2 Cor 8:5

5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.