

## ACTS 5

### **Unstoppable:** An Unlikely Jailbreak

Hey church, so good to be with each of you this morning, and for those watching from home, either out of town or staying home due to COVID, to glad we are able to carry this service on our Facebook page through their livestreaming platform.

We are continuing in this incredible story of the Book of Acts that points us to the Unstoppable nature of the Spirit, Mission, Gospel and Church. And, I really hope each of you will jump into one of our small groups. We have 2 meeting on Zoom and 1 meeting in person. If you're not in a small group, get in a small group. Read the chapter of Acts between Sundays, meditate on the Word of God throughout the week, and let you faith grow as you see the Unstoppable nature of the Spirit, Mission, Gospel and Church.

If you remember from last week, we had the start of persecution in the early church. They apostles are centered on the priorities of God, they're committed to the teaching of the Word, prayer, the fellowship of the church, and God adds to their number.

Remember from last week – the captain of the temple police drags Pete and John in front of the temple rulers, and they tell Pete and John to stop it. Pete though, stands up to them and says, paraphrasing here of course, I'm going to listen to God (even if that means I disobey you).

Pete and John were fearless, in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. We see in the following verses that their fearlessness, their boldness was contagious – and they prayed for boldness by the Spirit of God.

Continuing the story, we see this picture of a Christian community, a family, a church that sacrificially cared for one another. The end of CH4 in the Book of Acts paints this picture of the Christian community – committed to the Word of God and the Good of Others. That's not an either/or proposition, that's a both/and proposition.

READ 4:33-35

<sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them. <sup>34</sup> For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what was sold,<sup>35</sup> and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need.

So we see right at the beginning, a marrying of the PREACHING with the HELPING. As the story transitions to CH5, we see this story that makes us all a little squirmish if we're completely honest. Ananias and Saphira struck dead for lying to the Holy Spirit. And for the next 2,000 years you never hear of a Christian couple naming their daughter Sapphira (even though it means precious or beautiful), right. Because no matter how nice the name would be,

I think what we learn from that story, is seeking the approval of people is a form of deadly idolatry and greed. Trying to take credit for a sacrifice without actually making the sacrifice.

We see in 5:12 that many signs were being done through the hands of the apostles (not through everyone there, but specifically through the apostles to validate their teaching about Jesus).

And in response, Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers – “multitudes” of both men and women. What an incredible picture – we’re going to preach the greatness of Jesus, we’re going to help people, we’re going to sacrificially love people, and we’re going to trust in the sovereignty of God to add people to our number. Because the Mission, Spirit, Gospel and Church of Jesus Christ are UNSTOPPABLE.

Not even a jail cell can stop it. If you have a Bible, and you haven’t already turned to the Book of Acts, I invite you to turn to Acts 5. We’re going to work through a big section of Acts 5, starting with V17 – as we see this incredible story of an unlikely Jail Break.

#### **READ 5:17-18**

##### **I. BLINDED BY JEALOUSY**

V17 – They were jealous of Pete and John and the rest of the apostles. But not just like, man I wish we had that impact – I believe behind their jealousy with a fear of losing their position of power and influence and ultimately control over the Jewish people. So jealous that they missed the obvious work of God right in front of their eyes.

Like the pastor that brings in a guest preacher for one Sunday, and sees scores of people respond to the Gospel – rather than celebrate God’s grace being shown to people that were dead in their sin, he’s jealous. Sadly it happens more than you’d want to know.

They were jealous, and their jealousy blinded them to the things of God.

#### **READ 5:19-21**

##### **II. An Unlikely Jailbreak**

This jailbreak is incredible. Not only is it supernatural, and angel sent by God opens the doors of the jail and tells them to go back to the temple and tell all the people about “this life.”

**This Life → Jesus, the bread of life, the way the truth and the life, the author of eternal life → the one that came to offer abundant life, meaningful life now and forever life with Him in heaven when we die.**

You’d never be able to make this up – it’s such an incredible happening. An angel appears and opens the door. And, unlike every single prison break show or movie, they’re told to go back to the temple and tell all the people. Unbelievable.

### **III. The Court's Surprise**

#### **READ V21B – 24**

The temple officers, at this point have no idea what's going on. They are getting together to deal with the apostles, and send for them to be brought from the jail.

V24 – when they heard they weren't at the temple they were baffled. Probably never had a jail break like this.

I would love to have known what was racing in their heads. When you read this story, remember, it's a real story of real people and real events. It really happened. Would be incredible to know the thoughts of these guys as they're like, "jail's empty bro, sorry."

### **IV. Standing and Teaching the People**

#### **READ V25**

After this incredible jailbreak, how in the world could the apostles NOT have obeyed the angel's instructions. Here's what I'm convinced of – a principle that is key to following Jesus – to believe in Jesus is to Obey Jesus. We see this right here. The guys were broken out of jail, and they did what the angel told them – go back and teach them about Jesus.

#### **Principle: To believe Jesus is to Obey Jesus.**

I love crime shows, spy shows, action thrillers. There was this movie – Shawshank Redemption. Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman, couple of scenes that are terrible, rated R, but probably in my top 3 greatest movies. Tim Robbins, thrown in jail, kept in jail, but has this long and elaborate escape plan that actually works. And he escapes and ends up on a beach somewhere. Because when you escape from jail in the movies, you go to a non-extradition country with a great beach and ride it out.

But not so with apostles. They go right back to the temple and keep doing what got them locked up in the first place. You see the boldness that they had, from having been with Jesus, this wasn't just a quick shot of boldness – this was a life change by the power of the Holy Spirit and they couldn't not obey what the angel had told them. Because to BELIEVE JESUS IS TO OBEY JESUS.

**Illustration:** You know, I've never heard from an angel. Never once. I've also never heard God speak audibly. When I hear people say something like "God spoke to me..." I'm always tempted to ask "really, do you think God's a tenor or a bass?" That's funny right? But hear me – I do hear from God, every day as I open this book, and God's Spirit and God's Word work together in my life. And I see how great a Savior Jesus is, How incredible the grace and glory and mercy of God in Christ is, and the Spirit of God leads me through the Word of God and changes my desires, actions, thoughts, and I realize that to Believe Jesus is to Obey Jesus. Regardless of the Cost.

We obey Jesus, because we believe and love Jesus. We know there's a cost to following Jesus, but the reward of following Him, the Joy of following Him propels us to loving trustful obedience, regardless of the cost.

**Principle: To believe Jesus is to Obey Jesus. Regardless of the cost.**

## **V. The Trial**

### **Read V26-28**

**They're basically saying to the apostles** "How dare you not listen to us!" The Jewish leaders, see, they weren't used to people not listening to them. They brokered in control over people, and they used control of the temple to stay in control of the people. The outward act of worship at the synagogue, was so critical to not just their religious life but their family life and their culture. And the threat of being removed from the synagogue, to most people would have been crushing. So people generally did what the temple leaders told them to do. They brokered in control.

Remember the story in John 9 – Jesus miraculously gives sight to a blind guy that was blind from birth. Dude starts telling everyone that he can see. When the Jewish leaders questioned his parents, they said "We know this is our son, and that he was born blind...We don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he's of age." The next verse says they were afraid of being removed from the synagogue.

This would be crushing to a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish person, the threat of being thrown out of the synagogue – because of its centrality in Jewish life.

V28 – Didn't we strictly order you...

These guys are slow learners. Like, super slow. They just don't get it. They're not going to stop.

## **VI. Their Impact**

It says in V28 that their teaching had filled ALL of Jerusalem. When you read this story, it's easy to almost skip over their impact – the impact of their message and the miracles the apostles did that accompanied and validated their message. The whole city was filled with their teaching.

Wouldn't it be incredible if all of Bradenton was filled with the teaching of Gospel-believing, Gospel-proclaiming churches? Like not just RCM, but all of the churches that believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and all of the churches that proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ → if our churches' level of obedience was so great that they said "All of Bradenton is filled with the teaching of Jesus"?

The last thing I want us to see from this story is Peter's Obedience

## **VII. Peter's Obedience**

### **READ V29-32**

V29 – URGENCY – WE MUST. There was an urgency in Peter’s words, there was a Holy Spirit given boldness in his ongoing defense, there was this supernatural compulsion to keep telling people about Jesus. He couldn’t not obey.

V31 – To give and offer forgiveness – Hear me – Jesus didn’t come to be a good teacher, so that we could follow his ways. He came to offer life to people dead in sin. He came to offer forgiveness, through his blood, his once for all time sacrifice on the cross, offering salvation to all who believe.

And He calls us to OBEY him. To obey him as we believe in Him, and to BELIVE in him as we obey him. See there’s this undeniable link between believing and obeying. Believe and Obey. Believe and Obey.

How could Pete, again, stand before the Jewish leaders and boldly obey the commands of Christ? Because the only authority they were concerned with was Jesus. The temple courts have NOTHING to hold over the apostles. Nothing. The apostles have been saved by grace through their faith in Jesus – and the temple leaders got nothing on them. Can I tell you, if you have turned from your sin and are trusting in Jesus alone – you have the same UNSTOPPABLE spirit inside of you. Someone tells you to keep quiet about all this Jesus stuff – they got nothing on you. Your spouse, your boss, your kids, your parents want you to stop it with Jesus – they got nothing on you, because just like Pete and John and the rest of the apostles, you have the spirit of God inside you and the spirit of God is Unstoppable.

Will you obey? What does obedience look like?

- Work
- Neighbors
- Kids
- Parents
- At the grocery store
- In seasonal traffic
- At school
- With your friends