

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

Obeying God in Popularity and Persecution

Acts 5:12-32

Fear and Favor

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. ¹³ Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. ¹⁴ And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.

Persecution

¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹ But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." 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.

Obey

²² But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, ²³ 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!" ²⁴ Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 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!" ²⁶ Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. ²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, ²⁸ 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!" ²⁹ But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹ Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 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."

1. How was the prayer in Acts 4:23-31 answered in today's verses?
2. Discuss how "Yet none of the rest dared join them" (v.13), might relate to what happened to Ananias and Sapphira?
3. What two charges did the Sanhedrin have against the apostles in v.28?
4. In responding to the Sanhedrin in v. 29, why was it important that the other apostles were mentioned?
5. Read Romans 13:1-2, Romans 13:7, 1 Peter 2:13-14?
 - Do these verses contradict Acts 5:29? If so, how?
 - How will Christians determine when civil disobedience is necessary? How do Christians discern when to do that?
6. How does God show His love to the Sanhedrin? What characteristics of God is displayed in this?
7. What is the connection between God, obedience, the Holy Spirit and a Christian?
8. The apostles had the power of the Holy Spirit to heal others in Jesus' name and became "popular". There are many pastors that have also become "popular" today as they "heal in Jesus' name". What are your thoughts about this?
9. If you are Christian, do you have the power to heal the sick in Jesus' name? Why or why not?
10. In times of "popularity" and "persecution" do you use this time to share the gospel with others?