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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**“COUNTED WORTHY TO**

**SUFFER SHAME FOR HIS NAME”**

**Acts 5:33-42**

***Acts 5:33 "When they heard [that], they were cut [to the heart], and took counsel to slay them."***

Previously we learned that the apostles of Jesus, led by Peter had escaped from jail and were back in the temple preaching. They had been commanded of the high priest not to speak any more in Jesus' name. The apostles told these religious leaders that they in fact caused the death of Jesus. They, also, told them that they had need to repent. The Jewish law said that you needed two witnesses to establish a fact. The disciples reminded them that they were all witnesses of Jesus' resurrection and that the operation of the Holy Ghost in the miracle healings was actually a witness, also. Now in verse 33. They would have to get Peter and these other apostles quieted down, or they would be thrown out of their high position in the temple. This deeply grieved them that they might lose their high esteem among the people, and they started figuring out a way to kill these apostles to get them quieted down. You would have thought they would have had a guilty conscience and repented, but they did not. Their only fear was of losing their power over the people.

***Acts 5:34 "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;"***

Gamaliel means reward of God. This man was a very educated man in the law and seems to have wisdom in the decisions he makes. Gamaliel was a respected Pharisee, a prominent teacher at Jerusalem, a member of the Jewish high council (the Sanhedrin), and the former teacher of Paul. When the lives of the apostles were in jeopardy before the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel quieted them with his persuasive and pragmatic speech. First of all, he is very careful to put the apostles back out of hearing range, so they cannot hear him plead their case. Had they been in close range, the rulers would not have listened, because they would not want to lose face before these Hebrews.

***Acts 5:35 "And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men."***

We see, here, a solemn warning to be careful in dealing with these men. Gamaliel is saying, you must be sure of what you are accusing them of and, also, careful not to cause their followers to come in force against you. They could cause a really big problem for the leaders of the temple, if they do not handle it just right. This man is not only an educated man in the law, but uses very good biblical judgment and wisdom, as well.

***1 Chronicles 16:22 “Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”***

***Acts 5:36 "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought."***

***Acts 5:37 "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, [even] as many as obeyed him, were dispersed."***

Many false messiahs have arisen throughout the ages, as Christ Himself predicted (Matthew 24:5). These have all died and have amounted to nothing. Gamaliel cites two such cases from his lifetime to discourage any rash actions against the Twelve. The first is Theudas. The only thing we know for sure is that he claimed to be a great prophet and convinced about 400 to follow him. However, this Theudas did not pass the test of time. Theudas was killed and his followers scattered. The second is Judas of Galilee. Galilee was the place he led his rebellion from. He was opposing the census, so tradition says. In the Bible, the only mention of him is here. He was killed just like Theudas and his followers scattered. You see, these both were worldly men and the men who followed them were of the flesh. They were not spiritual men. There really is no comparison at all to the Lord Jesus Christ.

***Acts 5:38 "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:"***

***Acts 5:39 "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."***

This Gamaliel is advising the temple leaders to just let the apostles of Jesus alone and let them run their course. If they are not of God, this that they teach will die out and the followers of this Jesus will be scattered. This is the wisest suggestion he has made yet. He tells them, just in case this is of God, then you are fighting against God and there is no way for you to win. One of the statements Jesus said to the disciples, when they tried to stop someone from ministering in Jesus' name is don't do it.

***Mark 9:39-40***

***39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.***

***40 For he that is not against us is on our part.***

It would be well for all followers of Christ to remember this Scripture. In spite of our distinctions, we should all be working together, not fighting each other.

***1 Corinthians 1:10-13***

***10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.***

***11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.***

***12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.***

***13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?***

***Philippians 1:12-21***

***12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;***

***13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;***

***14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.***

***15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:***

***16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:***

***17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.***

***18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.***

***19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,***

***20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.***

***21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***

***Acts 5:40 "And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten [them], they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."***

The council seemingly agreed in principle but not in practice. If they truly agreed that these men might be of God, why did they beat them? They still commanded them not to speak in Jesus' name. It appears that, they were still against them, even knowing that they might be of God. Many feel that these religious leaders knew all along that these apostles were of God. They were just jealous and were not willing to admit they were wrong. So they flogged the apostles, threatened them, and set them free.

***Acts 5:41 "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."***

***Acts 5:42 "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."***

When the apostles left the Sanhedrin, they went out rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. Then they went right back to proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. Consider their response. They didn’t depart in fear or grief. They departed with joy! And not only did they walk away from their beating rejoicing, but they rejoiced that they were deemed worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. This is such a far cry from what many Christians of today do. Christians, now, want everything to go perfectly for them. They are really not interested in suffering for Christ at all. These early Christians wanted to be as near like Jesus as they could. They were pleased to suffer for Him, He suffered first that they might be saved. They felt to suffer for Christ was an honor, not shame. You can easily see that these apostles did not heed the command of the rulers of the temple. They obeyed God and not man. The church seems to always grow the most in times of persecution.

***1 Peter 2:19-21***

***19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.***

***20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.***

***21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:***

***1 Peter 4:13 “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”***

***1 Peter 3:14 “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;”***

***1 Peter 3:17 “For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”***

**QUESTIONS**

1. What did these rulers want to do to the apostles?
2. What did cut to the heart mean?
3. Who stood up in the council to advise them?
4. What was he a doctor of?
5. What did he suggest to do with the apostles?
6. Why did they have respect for Gamaliel?
7. What warning did Gamaliel give in verse 35?
8. What was the name of the false leader mentioned in verse 36?
9. How many followers did he have?
10. What happened to his followers?
11. Who was Judas of Galilee?
12. What happened to his followers?
13. What kind of men were both of these men?
14. If these apostles are not of God, what will happen to their followers?
15. If it is God, what are these rulers actually doing?
16. Why did Jesus say not to stop someone ministering in His name?
17. After they agreed with Gamaliel what did they do to the apostles?
18. What did they command the apostles not to do?
19. What did the apostles rejoice about?
20. Where did the apostles preach daily?