

THEY CEASED NOT

ACTS 5:34-42

Text: Acts 5:42

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⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Introduction:

We see the spirit of the Sanhedrin in Acts 5:32. As we read this verse we are reminded of the constant adversity the apostles faced.

Acts 5:32-33

³² *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* ³³ *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.*

It's never easy to live under constant stress and adversity.

As the Sanhedrin became increasingly angry and jealous toward the apostles they once again threatened to put them to death; yet "they ceased not." Notice the setting as we begin this passage: We see that from among the ranks of the Sanhedrin, there

arose a voice of reason from Gamaliel. There was probably the same man who had trained the Apostle Paul. He was most likely not a man in favor of Christianity, yet he spoke on behalf of the apostles.

He reminds them of a man named Theudas who had risen up and was soon killed.

He persuaded them not to kill the apostles' yet, so they beat the apostles and commanded them not to preach Christ.

They understood that if the doctrine of Christ was preached, it must prevail, and if it prevailed, they would come to naught.

1. THE STRENGTH OF THEIR MINISTRY (VS 41)

Acts 5:41

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

Their strength is seen in the fact that they were rejoicing after they had been beaten.

James said it like this:

James 1:2

² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

What was behind this strength?

A. The Filling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 4:8

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

B. The Spirit Imparts Grace for Trials

Hebrews 4:15-16

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

2 Timothy 2:1

¹ Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Illustration: Polycarp

Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna, hearing that persons were seeking for him, escaped, but was discovered by a child. After feasting the guards who apprehended him, he desired an hour in prayer, which

being allowed, he prayed with such fervency, that his guards repented that they had been instrumental in taking him. He was, however, carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place. The proconsul then urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee;--reproach Christ."

Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?" At the stake to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, encircled his body, like an arch, without touching him; and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword, when so great a quantity of blood flowed out extinguished the fire. But his body, at the instigation of the enemies of the Gospel, especially Jews, was ordered to be consumed in the pile, and the request of his friends, who wished to give it Christian burial, rejected. They nevertheless collected his bones and as much of his remains as possible, and caused them to be decently interred.

John Huss

A reformer who believed the Scriptures to be the infallible and supreme authority in all matters. He died at the stake for that belief on his 42nd birthday.

Note:

When they stripped him of his priestly garments, degraded him, put a paper crown on his head, on which was painted devils, with this inscription, "A ringleader of heretics." Which when he saw, he said: "My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns; why should not I then, for His sake, again wear this light crown."

When the chain was put about him at the stake, he said, with a smiling countenance, "My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake, and why then should I be ashamed of this rusty one?"

When the wood was piled up to his neck, the duke of Bavaria offered Hess a final chance to change his mind. "No, (said Huss;) I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency; and what I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood."

The flames were now applied to the wood, when Hess began to sing a hymn with so loud and cheerful a voice that he was heard through all the cracklings of the flame.

2. THE STEADFASTNESS OF THEIR MINISTRY (VS 42)

Acts 5:42

⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

A. The Preached Daily

B. They Preached Determinately

Acts 20:20-21

²⁰ *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,* ²¹ *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

3. The Scope of Their Ministry (vs 42)

Acts 5:42

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

A. They Alternated Their Approach

1. Temple

2. In every house

B. They Exalted Christ in Their Preaching

1 Corinthians 1:23-24

²³ *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;* ²⁴ *But*

*unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

When our lives are finished, may it be said of us that
“they ceased not.”

Faithfulness to God is not a novel thing; it’s to be our
normal practice.