

Acts 5:12-42

July 13, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

The apostles continued boldly sharing in Jesus's name even though the Sanhedrin ordered them not to. We are also called to boldly proclaim the gospel, no matter the cost.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some things we have seen the believers do so far in the book of Acts?

What are some ways the early believers displayed boldness?

Today, we continue our study of Acts with a story of the resilience of the apostles. After healing a lame man and preaching in Solomon's Colonnade (Acts 3), Peter and John were arrested, brought before the Sanhedrin, and ordered to stop teaching in Jesus's name (Acts 4:18). They told the Sanhedrin they could not stop proclaiming the message they received from God, and in today's passage we'll see that they really meant it! Our



passage opens with these men, empowered by the Holy Spirit, preaching in Solomon's Colonnade again. It ends with the apostles being brought before the Sanhedrin another time.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 5:12-21.

How did the apostles display boldness in this passage?

How does boldness for God display our faith in Him?

What can we learn from the apostles' example?

Once again, the apostles were teaching in Jesus's name openly in Solomon's Colonnade. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the apostles performed many signs and wonders. Sick and demon-possessed men and women were carried out to them so they might be healed. The Holy Spirit used even the apostle Peter's shadow to heal the sick (v.15). All the people who were brought out from surrounding towns were healed. Note the parallel to Jesus's ministry in Matthew 4:23: "Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

The Holy Spirit used these miraculous events to save souls. Verse 14 tells us that more and more men and women came to believe in Jesus. God used the apostles' boldness to seek and save the lost.

These events attracted attention, including the attention of the Sadducees. We learned in chapter 4 that the Sadducees were already annoyed because the apostles proclaimed Jesus's resurrection, and the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. In this passage, we learn that they were jealous of the attention and success of the apostles (v.17).

Though the high priest threw the apostles in jail, an angel freed them by opening the door during the night. The angel instructed them to return to the temple and continue teaching, and they did! Note their devotion to the gospel. They chose faith over fear and continued boldly in the mission Christ had given them (Acts 1:8).

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 5:22-32.

Given their recent experiences, how might the disciples have responded differently than going back to proclaim publicly?



How did their obedience serve to verify their proclamation?

What can we learn from the way they prioritized acting as Jesus's witnesses over anything else?

The religious leaders and temple police, understandably shocked to find the apostles missing from the jail (v.24), located the apostles while they were teaching in the temple and brought them before the Sanhedrin peacefully.

The Sanhedrin were more concerned with their loss of power and upholding their reputations than considering the truth about Jesus (see Matthew 23:27).

The apostles' response? "We must obey God rather than people" (v.29). They continued preaching despite being ordered to stop by the same leaders who condemned Jesus. Clearly, nothing was going to stand in the way of their acting as Jesus's witnesses.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 5:33-42.

What argument did Gamaliel make in this passage?

What can we learn about God's purposes and plans from this passage?

Though the apostles' words enraged the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel intervened. Gamaliel was a highly respected Rabbi (v. 34), under whom the apostle Paul studied (Acts 22:3). He was known to be temperate in his attitude and teaching, and we see that reflected in his response here.

Gamaliel reasoned that they should wait and see. If the work and testimony of Jesus was of human origins (a hoax), it would fail as others had before Him. However, if the work and testimony of Jesus was of God, they would not be able to stand in the disciples' way. In reality, the Sanhedrin were fighting against God, and God's plans simply cannot be overthrown.

After Gamaliel persuaded the Sanhedrin, they had the apostles flogged and issued the same order as before: Stop preaching in Jesus's name (v.40). In response, the apostles rejoiced because "they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully" for Jesus (v. 41). Then they continued teaching, obeying God's call to share the good news rather than the Sanhedrin's order to stop.



APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How do we struggle to obey God rather than people today? If you feel comfortable sharing, what is God calling you to do that you are nervous about because of what other people might think?

What can we learn from the apostles' response to suffering for Jesus's sake?

Who do you need to boldly proclaim the truth of Jesus to this week?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for seeking and saving lost, ordinary people like you and me. Ask Him to give you and your group boldness as you go out and act as His witnesses, sharing the good news with those in your life and community.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

July 20, 2025 --- Acts 6:1-7



COMMENTARY

Acts 5:12-42

Apostles' Miracles (5:12–16). The final summary on the life of the early church focuses on the power of its witness. The apostles were known for their miracles and their testimony to Christ. They witnessed regularly in Solomon's Portico, a colonnaded area along the wall of the temple. The people's response was mixed. Some kept an awestruck distance from the Christian manifestation of the Spirit's power. Others joined them, and the Christian community continued to grow.

Apostles before the Council (5:17–42). The apostles' bold witness in the temple area was bound to catch the notice of the authorities, who had strictly forbidden them to witness to Christ (4:18). This time all the apostles were arrested and held in jail overnight awaiting a hearing before the Sanhedrin.

Arrest, Escape, and Re-arrest (5:17–26). God was very much with His messengers, and His angel released them miraculously in the night. The apostles did not flee. They remained in the area and witnessed to the people who gathered at the temple at daybreak. Ironically, the Sanhedrin had no one to try at its morning session. The apostles were finally located, back at the very witnessing for which they were supposed to be on trial. Their miraculous release was undeniable, and so they were led "without force" to the Sanhedrin.

Appearance before the Sanhedrin (5:27–40). The majority of the Sanhedrin were ready to order the death of the apostles for continuing their witness. But one of the Pharisaic minority urged moderation. He was Gamaliel, a leading rabbi, the teacher of Paul (22:3). He cited two former movements which claimed God's guidance but came to ruin and Gamaliel assured the Sanhedrin that the Christian movement would also fail if it lacked God's blessing. On the other hand, they could not stop it if God were behind it. The Sanhedrin heeded Gamaliel's advice and released the apostles, but not before giving them the flogging prescribed by Jewish law (thirty-nine lashes on the bare flesh with a leather whip).

Release and Witness (5:41–42). Though once again forbidden by the Sanhedrin to witness, the apostles continued their bold testimony to Christ. They were assured by now that although they might suffer disgrace and bodily punishment, God's word would prosper.

