



**Sermon Text: Acts 5:17-42**

*Sermon Date: October 22, 2017*

This Sunday, we walked through our text by taking it in five sections, like scenes from a divine drama.

#### **ARRESTED AND AN ANGELIC EXTRACTION (17-21)**

All of the apostles are arrested and thrown into the public prison. The religious leaders hope to choke out the church by eliminating its leadership. That evening, however, an angel is sent to escort the apostles secretly from the prison and commands them to go and preach the gospel in the Temple at daybreak.

#### **PERPLEXED AND POWERLESS RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES (21b-26)**

The next morning, the high priest arrives confident the situation is finally under control. He gathers all the religious leaders in Jerusalem and calls for the prisoners to be brought to them. The officers go and discover that the doors are locked, the guards are standing at attention, but the prisoners are gone. The startling news arrives that the prisoners are back at the Temple doing the very thing they were arrested for—teaching the people the gospel of Christ.

#### **UNDAUNTED AND DEFIANT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE (27-32)**

Once the apostles are re-arrested, they are brought back before the council. When questioned, Peter boldly announces they will not stop preaching. Convinced of the truth of the gospel and the commission of Christ, they must obey God rather than man. Here we see the foundation of Christian civil disobedience. Whenever a human authority insists we violate God's commands, we disobey. And yet, our disobedience is submissive defiance. The apostles refuse to obey the council, but they willfully submit to being arrested and beaten.

#### **OUTRAGE AND AN UNLIKELY ADVOCATE (33-39)**

The council is ripped open in rage and they want to kill the apostles. Yet an unlikely advocate steps forward. Gamaliel argues that if this messianic movement is of man, it will fall apart just as previous ones have done. Yet if it is from God, then it cannot be stopped. We notice the intricacy of God's providential control. The God who works miracles, who sends angelic extraction teams, is the same God who works through ordinary events. Here he turns the tide of human history by a single man making a sensible appeal.

#### **ABUSED AND THE JOY OF DISHONOR (40-42)**

The apostles are nearly beaten to death, yet they leave rejoicing. Suffering for Christ awakens a deeper joy in him. Richard Wurmbrand says, "Those who are with Jesus in suffering hear his music to which other men are deaf. They dance and do not care if they are considered insane."

#### **TWO ESSENTIAL TAKE-AWAYS**

1. **An Unstoppable Gospel:** The work of the gospel will not fail. Opposed, threatened, or abused, the gospel will still succeed. Let us pour our lives out for the sake of an unfailing gospel!
2. **All-Satisfying Pleasure:** Suffering strips away everything so that we enjoy Jesus undiluted. We discover just how satisfying He truly is when He is all we have.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Why is it important for us to have a well-rounded understanding of God's sovereignty and providence?
3. Do you believe that Christ is all-satisfying? If not, why is that?