

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Acts Series

These questions are for the **January 12, 2020** sermon, "In This Name." Please read the sermon passage (Acts 5:27-42) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

WHEN GOD'S ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IS RESISTED BY LOWER AUTHORITIES, NOTE . . .

1. The unique opportunities offered to believers (27-32)
 - a. While local authorities tried to LIMIT their effectiveness, they (authorities) brought them (believers) before the Sanhedrin which ultimately MULTIPLIED their effectiveness.
 - b. The schemes of the evil one always result in opportunities for gospel advancement!
 - i. Note that advancement comes through courageously obedient believers.
 - ii. Note that advancement comes in spite of imprisonment and persecution.
2. The unlikely assistance given to believers (33-40)
 - a. The enemies of God's people reasoned together about how to stop the advancement of the gospel.
 - b. Gamaliel, a very religious person, became a counselor to the Sanhedrin.
 - i. He said: "If this undertaking is of man, it will come to nothing."
 - ii. He said: "If this undertaking is of God, you cannot stop it."
 - c. God often uses "insiders" to steer decisions which ultimately conform to his will.
 - d. NOTE: Was Saul present at this council? Was God planting seeds for his conversion?
3. The joyful spirit distinguishing believers (41-42)
 - a. What an honor it is to suffer persecution while we stand for Jesus Christ!
 - i. NOTE: God does not save us from all persecution and suffering.
 - ii. In the wake of ongoing threats, they continued to teach/proclaim Jesus.
 - b. There is something worse than persecution and death: unfaithfulness to our LORD.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: The evil one continues to produce threats which produce fear which is intended to muzzle and intimidate the people of God. In what ways has fear limited your courage to speak openly about the person and work of your Lord, Jesus Christ?
2. Based on #1, above: Throughout all of history, the schemes of the evil one to stop the spread of the Gospel have often resulted in the exponential multiplication of disciples. We should expect that the church will experience persecution and affliction. Furthermore, we should expect that God will use courageous obedience of his disciples to continually build his church. How can the church improve in the area of expectations? How can we improve in the area of courage?
3. Based on #2, above: When God's enemies reasoned together, their plans backfired. And its very possible that Saul (Paul)'s ears heard the plans. God may have been priming the pump of Saul's heart to respond to the Gospel. Who are you praying for right now who is firmly in the camp of God's enemies? How might we pray for that person tonight?
4. Based on #3, above: We make distinctions between joy and happiness, but the Bible rarely does. Are you happy in the LORD? Do you rejoice in the Lord, even while suffering? Why? Why not?