

Gospel Reactions

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[0 : 0 0] Standing at the crossroads of history behind you stands a time-tested message, one that has weathered empires, revolutions, and cultural shifts. And ahead of you is an ever-changing world where new beliefs rise as quickly as they fade. Now consider being asked to share this time-tested message knowing that you will encounter an array of reactions just by sharing this message. You will have some reactions of admiration, some will be of skepticism, and some may be downright opposition. Well such was the reality for the early church that we're going to look at this morning in the book of Acts chapter 5 and verses 17 through verse number 42. As I shared a couple of weeks ago I was figuring out how to break down all of these verses but this is really just one section and there's no way to break it down. So we're going to look at all of these verses this morning. So as the apostles and as the early church stood on the streets of Jerusalem they were met with a spectrum of responses from those who trusted Jesus as their Savior to those who probably said I don't want to hear that message and some were in your face opposed to the message that they gave. And very similar to some of the reactions that we might receive today from sharing the truth of God's holy word. So how do we navigate?

The diverse reactions that we're going to receive when we share the truth of God's word, when we share the gospel in a world that is lost, that is broken, and how do we respond when we are face to face with all of these different reactions? Well let's look together this morning at the book of Acts chapter 5 beginning with verse number 17. We won't read this entire section together first but we will get to it a verse at a time.

Verse number 17. came out to the group of wrote and then what was it called?

He's got redeveloped and headed by the word and said iticorn that'sllaided by the word and said it called the word and said it perché Temperate was tri feeder. And it passed down by saying it whilst we think of that singer En■ii des■ ■■■ And it was halfway andatchet that diventa is really like it or something that they said there would be after an island second. And later there will be read if this or 14 days before it basically went to him and said itShouldn't been diameter, but at base Thank you.

Thank you.

[4 : 1 0] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. and they were filled with indignation the high priest his associates and all the members of the sadduceean party rise up and they were jealous just a little background of these religious leaders the sanhedrin was a council was a group of religious leaders in the first century the first century roman palestine and they were the ones that heard the all the different cases of law as it related to the jewish law and the romans allowed them to hold their court to hold their council and to take care of anything that related to the jewish law now there's some debate as to the makeup of the sanhedrin some say well there were sadducees and there were pharisees and in this case most likely the two were there in the same group sadducees was one of the the the sanhedrin was kind of like a two-party system well it was a three-party system but the main two were the sadducees pharisees sadducees was a group of religious leaders who took the old testament scripture seriously and they didn't put much credence in oral tradition so they pretty much just stuck with what the old testament scriptures said and they didn't believe in a resurrection they didn't believe that one day that the bodies of those who were god's people would be resurrected the other group were the pharisees the pharisees unlike the sadducees took the old testament scripture and added a whole plethora a whole bunch of oral traditions and so they added oral tradition to the old testament scripture but they also they believed in a resurrection so those were the two primary parties that were involved in this group that we see peter and john coming before and they were not upset primarily by a theological disagreement what we see here they were primarily upset because they were threatened by the apostles influence and by their popularity they didn't want to lose the influence and the popularity that they already had so this led them to arrest the apostles put them in the public jail and they threatened them and so and they were filled with indignation and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison now think about when maybe when you've been challenged when you've shared something the truth about god's word that maybe was in direct opposition to to maybe a social policy or something that that many people believed in and very often you might have had a very negative reaction especially when it threatened the the establishment or the status quo now there are many instances today when we have these reactions when we share the truth of god's word whistleblowers or silence genuine reformers genuine reformers may be marginalized see that people don't want to hear biblical truth this is well you know what this is what we think this is what we believe and if it's good for us it's what we're going to do no matter what goes on anywhere else or no matter what anyone else says we are living in a society today that does not want to believe that there is a standard by which the entire human

population should live by it's whatever feels good it's whatever is the uh the common policy of the day but the apostle peter and john were saying this is what god's word says jesus is the only way to heaven you know there are many believe there are many they believe well you know someone someone might be able to get to heaven without jesus that is untrue that is false there is no one jesus said i am the way the truth and the life no man cometh to the father but through or but by me so just as the apostles were facing opposition so did the disciples and the apostles and the first century church and so what happens next we see verse 19 but at night an angel of the lord opened the prison doors and brought them out so just like in peter's deliverance if you've read first peter or excuse me if you read acts chapter 12 verses 7 through 11 and peter was in jail and in the middle of the night an angel comes in and lets him out and of course it's a funny story he comes to the door and the girl named rhoda comes to the door and and she says oh it's peter and she shuts the door on him and she goes in and they said no it can't be you know it's his spirit it's it can't be him and he keeps on knocking the door let me in let me in and so the p the the the angel intervenes here and you're tempted to smile when you have these religious leaders they put peter and john in jail and then they expect that we're going to go and we're going to get them out and we're going to read them the riot act and then we're going to to force them not to talk about jesus anymore can you imagine the surprised look on the guards now these were trained guards probably one on either side of the door and they are standing sentry they're standing guard all night long the next morning the representative from the sanhedrin comes in and and he's saying we need these guys and they unlock the door and they look in can you imagine their surprise when they realize how did they get out of here we didn't unlock the door uh we didn't go to sleep and when they discover that one of their that their most important prisoners were not there and just imagine if you will the astonishment on the pharise of the of the pharisees here they were they were trying to stop the miracles miracles but instead what they did what they were doing only multiplied the miracles and so here they are trying to stop people from hearing about jesus they were trying to stop people from getting so excited about this little thing that was going on and everybody was starting to follow this group called the way they were followers of the way and so they try to stop them they put the leaders in jail and what they find was we made it possible for another miracle to take place they were thwarted at every single turn so let's look at the next few verses verse 20 the next verse verse 21 and when they heard that they entered the temple in the morning and taught but the high priest and those with him came and called the council together with all the elders of the children of israel sent to the prison to have them brought but when the officers came didn't find them in the prison

[13 : 39] they returned and reported saying indeed we found the prison door shut securely and the guards standing outside the door but when they opened the door we found no one inside now when the high priest the captain of the temple and the chief priest heard these things they wondered think about that their mind was racing what do we do now what's going to happen we've been trying to stop this and it's getting worse it's been it's getting piled on one on top of the other and they wondered what the outcome would be so one came and told them look the men you put in prison are standing in the temple and they are teaching the people so let's look at the next few verses then the captain went with the officers brought them without violence they were fearing a riot they were fearing the people would rebel because think about this remember the last few verses we've been looking at in the book of acts because of the unity of the early church because of what god was accomplishing because they loved one another because they were taking care of one another and because of all the things the the local church was doing in the first century they gained popularity with the people around them the people thinking there's something to this this this group there's something going on and especially when ananias and sapphira do you remember the the couple that lied about what they sold and said that they had brought it all and laid it at the apostles feet but they lied and one died the wife came in later and she lied to and she drops dead and so no one wanted to be anywhere near them because they were afraid that god god's judgment would have fall upon them as well so we go on and when they had brought them they set them before the council and the high priest asked them did we not strictly command you not to teach in his name so what did they accuse of what did they accuse the apostles think about it you have filled jerusalem with your teaching now this wasn't merely an accusation it was a testament because what was the church doing the church is filling all jerusalem with the gospel the church was out and about in the marketplace uh in the homes in the neighborhoods at work they were talking about jesus they were sharing the gospel with those around and so even the the religious rulers were saying you guys are filling jerusalem with this jesus and that's all we're hearing about lately everybody's talking about jesus and you're filling jerusalem with this message so despite the council's attempts to stifle the message it had spread throughout jerusalem and so this was saying that the church the job of the church was being done what jesus had left them with be my witnesses wait here the holy spirit will come upon you we see that at the day of pentecost holy spirit comes and indwells and you will be my witnesses where you are in jerusalem judea samaria and ultimately all the way to the ends of the earth so what we see here in verse 29 peter and the other apostles answered and said we ought to obey god rather than men so what was the response of the apostles they wanted the world to know that it was god that they would be following so the challenge what we see

here is the apostles the early church were sharing the gospel you have filled jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood on us god's word is always going to face opposition there is always going to be someone who won't want to hear what you have to say you might try to share the gospel with someone at work and they might shut the door on you you might have your workplace that says you can't bring religion into the workplace they don't mind you bringing anything else into the workplace sometimes but they don't want you to talk about jesus now you can talk about spirituality all you want talk about god maybe but be careful don't talk about jesus so the response the next response to the gospel was the apostles said we need to obey god rather than man verse 31 god has exalted to his right hand to be prince and savior to give repentance to israel forgiveness of sins and we are his witnesses to these things and so also is the holy spirit whom god has given to us to obey him what was the first response the religious leaders attacked the gospel secondly the apostles affirmed the truth of the they said you told us not to do this but be informed you who murdered this jesus god raised him from the dead and we cannot not share about this jesus verse 29 but peter and the other apostles answered and said who are we going to obey you or god we ought to obey god rather than man so they answered directly to the council now this wasn't a simple act of defiance it was a declaration of their allegiance they say we belong to god and we saw the resurrected jesus so it was not just saying we just don't want to do what you want us to do they were saying we cannot help but talk about jesus think about a time when maybe you've been put in a situation and maybe god's word was at odds with a popular opinion a directive or maybe even with the prevailing culture maybe at work you faced ethical dilemmas that maybe tested your principles or maybe you were in social gatherings and someone was talking about something that was contrary to the truth of god's word and maybe you felt like maybe i shouldn't speak up but there are times when we should speak up and say you know this is not my opinion but this is what the bible says this is what god's word says and this is one of the reasons to memorize the word of god this is one of the reasons why it's important for children and adults to memorize god's word and so we don't just give an opinion we say in romans in acts in ephesians it says this and we quote the word of god and we can just leave it there and it's not our opinion and god's going to do his work remember he said his word will not come back to him without accomplishing its purpose god's word god's going to use his holy spirit to accomplish his will through his word it's not by might of men it's not by anything we can do or say it's not by winning the argument it's just simply proclaiming what god's word says so we may be challenged but we need to stand firm in our faith then the apostles revealed the resurrected christ

the god of our fathers he says he raised up jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree him god exalted to his right hand to be prince and savior to give repentance to israel and the forgiveness of sin see this wasn't just a doctrinal point it was their source of strength the resurrection is our source of strength we serve a risen savior amen we serve a god who is alive we serve a god who's not in a grave somewhere and there's not a tombstone that says this here lies muhammad or here lies buddha or here lies whoever we serve a god who is alive jesus rose from the dead the apostles those who went to the empty tomb and those who saw and witnessed the resurrected jesus when he appeared to them and appeared to a whole bunch others between his resurrection and his ascension into heaven they said we know he's alive and we cannot help but talking about this jesus now remember when we face opposition what did jesus say to his followers when he said you'll be my witnesses go and make disciples he says and lo i will be with you even to the end of the age don't worry about it god is with you he is alive he will tell you what to say in verse 32 and we are his witnesses to these things and so also is the holy spirit whom god has given to those who obey him so when you share christ when you share the gospel when you share the truth of god's word some will attack you but don't give up be like the apostles and say we need to speak what god's word says now what is the next potential response that you might get we'll look at gamaliel another one of these religious leaders who stands up and he puts his two cents in gamaliel just wants to avoid the truth he just wants to walk the fence or sit on the fence you know i'm not going to attack the gospel i'm not going to say that it's it's right i'm not going to say don't i'm not going to say do let's just kind of wait and see look at verse 33 to verse 39 when they heard this they were furious the religious leaders were angry and they wanted to kill peter and john then one in the council stood up a pharisee named gamaliel a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while they said come on guys let's go into let's go into committee let's put them outside a little while and then let's talk among ourselves and he said to them men of israel take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men for some time ago thaddeus or theodos arose up claiming to be somebody a number of men about 400 joined him he was slain and all who obeyed him were scattered and it came to nothing he said we've seen this before we've seen people crop up and they led some kind of sect and they became popular for a while that they gained a little bit of a following somebody killed him and it just petered out and it went to nothing then he says verse 37 and after this let me give you another instance this man judas of galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew

away many people after him he also perished and all who obeyed him were dispersed and now i say to you keep away from these men and let them alone for if this plan or this work is of men like these other two men it will come to men it will come to nothing but if it's of god you can't overthrow it lest you even be found to fight against god so he he was the voice of caution in the midst of frenzy so he right he stands up and he says now wait a minute let's not be hasty here let's not kill these guys because if god's in it we're guilty but it may be like these other two men and it would just leave it alone and let it die its own death just just kind of just kind of wait and see so the council was furious wanted to kill peter and john but someone steps in with a little bit more of a measured response so he cites some historical precedents and he reminds them of some past movements that that fizzled out they didn't amount to anything and they fell on their own so he advised he advised caution rather than rash action what about today's context think about it today gamaliel stance can be likened to many today who who who don't necessarily stand against the faith but they don't fully embrace it either you know they're uh they're the neutral voices uh they might see value in religion and spirituality they might say you know what we we can see that that that spirituality is good i mean prayer i mean pray that's that's fine go ahead and pray we're good we're good but they will be okay with religion and spirituality but they won't fully embrace it especially not the gospel they weigh the pros they weigh the cons and they're waiting for more evidence or they're waiting for a sign there are going to be some gamaliels in your life now how do we engage those who were just neutral you know they agree with you yeah yeah i'm i'm okay with that yeah that's good but they won't commit oh what do we do give them time let god's holy spirit do the work see our job is not to convince them our job is not to buttonhole them and and force them into trust in christ as their savior have patience let god's holy spirit do the work but don't give up on them we hear so many testimonies of people praying for someone for years 20 30 40 50 years and finally they trust christ as their savior let the holy spirit do his work do you realize the holy spirit's a whole lot more powerful than you are do you realize the holy spirit is active today and he's at work in men's hearts and men's minds and he's doing the work that god intends for him to do god's holy spirit is working so now we hear a call for patience you know if it's god's will you can't overthrow it he says take heed what you intend to do to them because there this was this group this is what happened to that group and he said all this this other group it's just they they dispersed and this is what's going to happen if this is just like that but be careful we may not be able to keep this uh from from happening so gamaliel's advice was pretty straightforward

his wisdom was rooted in a belief that time would reveal the truth of the matter now gamaliel's approach may sound reasonable think about it just give it time and let's see what happens and after all he's advocating what patience and we have all heard patience is a virtue right but there's a danger in perpetually sitting on the fence there's a danger in perpetual skepticism faith requires a step faith requires an active step not endlessly waiting and you and i are not guaranteed tomorrow so there are many who are sitting on the fence and just waiting to see we may not have the time and so be careful so true we should be thoughtful we should be discerning but endless wavering can lead to missed opportunities sometimes people wait to see the outcome where i'm just going to wait to see what happens before i get involved what does god say get involved just jump in with both feet don't be a gamaliel don't say well i'm going to wait to see what happens before i before i before i i get too involved before i get too invested in this thing you know what you either enter out you got to decide and so you either in or you are out now gamaliel's approach gamaliel's approach might save us from making some mistakes but it may also keep us from the profound joys and the growth that comes from bold faith just step out and trust god so as we navigate our spiritual journeys let's be seekers who actively pursue truth move forward on mission rather than being passive observers and just waiting to see what happens and hopefully maybe hopefully waiting for a proven conclusion one day just get involved so how did the early church respond we saw active opposition from the religious leaders we saw the disciples who said we are going to obey god not man we saw gamaliel who said just wait and see i'll sit on the fence for a little while longer and wait to see what happens well the church just said let's go let's we see embracing suffering as a badge of honor verse 41 and 42 so they departed from the presence of the council how did they respond how did peter and john respond they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of jesus christ they said we're like jesus jesus suffered jesus died because of his message and we have been counted worthy to suffer just like our lord and our savior and daily in the temple and in every house they did not cease teaching and preaching jesus as the anointed one as the messiah as the christ what do we see so they agreed they beat the apostles and they send them out they were flogged they were ordered not to speak about jesus anymore in the face of brutal opposition and in the face of physical pain and societal shame they kept going and they kept speaking the word of god you know in our society today

[33 : 55] sometimes standing up for truth can lead to opposition can lead to isolation or can lead to us being marginalized you know that's that's those right-wing christians oh the ones that you know they're fanatics you know what keep talking about jesus keep sharing god's word the apostles embrace suffering as a confirmation of their mission because what did jesus promise the world rejects me if you go out and in my name the world is going to potentially reject you as well so you're in good company you are going to be like me so what was the result a persistent witness they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing and verse 42 daily in the temple in every house they didn't cease teaching and preaching in the name of jesus so we see they continued in the early church model they worship corporately in the temple they met in small groups daily from home to home they ate together they met together they went out they they learned god's word together then they went out and they shared the gospel together now in today's the landscape of today's hyper connected world is tempting to think of witnessing that we do on special occasions you know it's something that we do on our community fun day it's something that we do when you know we go out and and we do something in the community but sharing the gospel is something that we're commanded to do as we go in our home in our community as we go about our business as we're dealing with a checker at the grocery store it's easy for us to just simply share a word of encouragement hand out maybe uh one of our uh our cards and say on the back we invite you to to church on the back there's some videos that show you uh that give you some answers to life's questions uh so blessings god bless you and and go on your way sometimes it's an opportunity for us to go into a complete gospel presentation uh do what we can we're going to get all kinds of responses don't give up just simply share the word so we've looked at verses 17 to 42 we've looked at different responses to the gospel this morning uh it's astonishing it's it's it's one message but it has all different kinds of responses bible tells us that is going to happen so what do we do some final next steps this morning in our connection cards this morning we have some next steps we're going to have an opportunity uh as the offering is received in just a few moments to hand these connection cards in but on the back uh want to be to memorize acts 5 29 want to be if you've never trusted christ as your savior trust jesus alone for your salvation jesus christ the sinless spotless lamb of god died on the cross in your place and mine the bible says he who knew no sin him him who knew no sin became sin for us and the wrath of god was on jesus christ he died on the cross for our sin before he breathed his final breath he said it is finished he was laid in the borrowed tomb he rose again from the dead proving that god was satisfied with the payment that jesus christ paid for your sin and mine and salvation comes by grace through faith not of yourselves it is a gift

of god not of works lest any man woman boy or girl should boast the bible says all who call upon the name of the lord shall be saved delivered from the penalty of sin and one day when we get to heaven we'll be delivered from the presence of sin as well our next next step is have bold conversations about your faith this week share the gospel with someone dedicate time each day to pray for boldness what happened to the early church when the apostles came back the first time and said that they were warned not to talk about jesus they got together they had a prayer meeting and said let's pray for boldness let's pray to be filled with the holy spirit and for boldness that we could go out and be even more bold than our witness for jesus christ then thirdly commit to stay faithful to the mission and what's our mission the mission jesus left us with be his witnesses make disciples baptizing them in the name of the father of the son and the holy spirit and teaching them he says whatsoever i have commanded you we're going to have all kinds of responses to the gospel don't give up because jesus said lo i'm with you even to the end of the age let's pray father this morning as we've come together we ask that your holy spirit would encourage us we ask heavenly father that your holy spirit would empower us and would provide a fresh feeling that we may be able to go out and to be your ambassadors to a hurting world to a world that that is wondering if there's purpose in life to a world that is wondering if there is more to life than what they see so father i pray that we may be able to be used by you in a mighty way in the lives of others help us to be difference makers in our world today and may your will be done in us and through us we pray in jesus name for you