

# God's Strength to Save His Own Enemies

2022.04.10 Morning Sermon in Acts 5:17–41

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**Main idea:** God sovereignly rules and overrules in every situation. All sin is ultimately against Him, but His response has been to use His strength to offer His enemies terms of peace: be saved by Jesus to serve Jesus and suffer with Jesus until you are glorified with Jesus!

<sup>17</sup>Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, <sup>18</sup>and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

<sup>19</sup>But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, <sup>20</sup>“Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.” <sup>21</sup>And when they heard that, they entered the temple early 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, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

<sup>22</sup>But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, <sup>23</sup>saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!” <sup>24</sup>Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. <sup>25</sup>So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!”

<sup>26</sup>Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. <sup>27</sup>And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, <sup>28</sup>saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”

<sup>29</sup>But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. <sup>30</sup>The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. <sup>31</sup>Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup>And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

<sup>33</sup>When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. <sup>34</sup>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. <sup>35</sup>And he said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. <sup>36</sup>For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. <sup>37</sup>After 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. <sup>38</sup>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, it will come to nothing; <sup>39</sup>but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

<sup>40</sup>And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup>So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

**Introduction:** When men and God flex. Sometimes, God puts the words “sovereign grace” in bolder letters for us.

## 1. God's Strength

- a. What is happening when the wicked “flex”? (v17–18, cf. 4:28). Even the raging of the nations can only accomplish what God’s hand and purpose have predetermined beforehand for them to do. What is really going on? Christians know!
- b. Why an angel? “One with God is a majority”—the great ease of (v19)
- c. The comparative cluelessness and helplessness of godless man (v22–26). The perplexity of the guards in v23. The wondering of the “high” priest, “captain” of the temple, and “chief” priests in v24. The fear of the intimidators in v26. One day, all intimidators will be petrified and then punished.
- d. The ultimate display (so far) of that strength: resurrection (v30a). If they couldn’t keep Jesus in the grave, what can they do that God will not overcome? If even your sin is being mortified, what suffering or persecution of yours will not one day be eradicated?

## 2. God's Servants

- a. When you’re with God, you’re a servant (v20–21a). He doesn’t become our Master to do whatever we want Him to do (which would be a punishment anyway!). He takes us as His servants so that we can have the *privilege* of doing whatever He says and participating in what He is doing.

- b. When you think you're in charge, you're not (v21b, v28). Those who have authority must remember that it's been given by God. Its purposes are defined by God, and its limits are set by God. He is in charge. And when you think that you are, you have just undercut what authority you thought you had, because God is now undermining you, and those under you may even come to the point where they have to rebel against you.
- c. No matter who seems to be in charge, God is in charge of you (v29). Peter and the apostles come to the point of required rebellion. They have a command from God, and they must fulfill it (cf. 4:19).
- d. The pain that gives us pleasure (v40–41, cf. Mt 5:11–12, 1Pet 4:12–16). Mt 5:11–12, *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*  
 1Pet 4:12–16, *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*  
 In persecution for righteousness, we receive honor (worthy) and fellowship (the Name of Jesus). It doesn't make it painless, but the pain itself reminds us what we have and Whom we have!

### 3. God's Salvation

- a. The concern we should all have (v28b). The council had a hint of their problem: they were guilty of the blood of Jesus. But they had no idea just how big the problem was. The issue is not what man might do about this guilt, but what God will do about it! Anti-semitism from those who call themselves Christians has been a real issue throughout the centuries, but they ought to be far more concerned with what God will do. In the same way, we worry overmuch about what men might think of us, or what men might do to us, when every healthy pang of conscience should really provoke us to consider what God thinks of our conduct.
- b. The good news includes the truth about that concern (v30b). The church does no one any favors when it backs off as soon as they resist the message of their guilt. It is better to speak even more plainly about what sin is—along with what God has done about it in Christ. This is an essential part of parenting. This is an essential part of all discipling. This is an essential part of evangelism.
- c. The power and purpose of Christ's exaltation
  - i. Still the "Lord and Christ" preaching of that first Pentecost sermon (v31). Only Yahweh can be on the throne. The Christ is the Prince and Savior.
  - ii. What He does as Lord and Christ: give repentance and forgiveness of sins (cf. Luk 24:47)... *beginning with His murderers!* Not just Israel as v31 says but very specifically, beginning in Jerusalem. If this is how Jesus has responded to His murderers, then there is nothing so horrible that His atonement couldn't cover it or that the terms of peace in the gospel are not offered to you.
  - iii. Sends His preachers (v32a). they are not just witnesses, but *His witnesses*. The doctrine of ordination, not just of apostles but also of elders, is not a power grab. It is, among other things, affirmation that Jesus Himself offers peace to you through His appointed and approved emissaries.
  - iv. Sends His Spirit—not just with power for apostles' signs (v12–16) but with power for all believers' faith (v32b). How will these priests be converted? Not by their ability to understand and agree with what they are hearing but by the Holy Spirit whom God (Jesus!) gives.
  - v. The terms of peace from an exalted King are not only to be acknowledged but obeyed. Don't just hear the gospel. Don't just believe the gospel. Obey the gospel! Yield yourself up to the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior, your King, and your God!
  - vi. So be careful how you respond to gospel preaching (v33). If you respond from yourself, from your flesh, you will find yourself ultimately an enemy of Christ. He is not available on other terms than He has offered, and all "alternative" responses end up in the same place as v33.

### 4. God's Spy (the exclamation point on this display of His sovereignty)

- a. Gamaliel (v34, cf. 22:5, 23:6) plays the part of Hushai (2Sam 16–17) or the town clerk of Ephesus (cf. 19:35ff). God has an agent in every room. In fact, He has trillions of them!
- b. Men vs men (v35–38) versus men vs God (v39). Both are always in play.

**Conclusion:** The God Whose wrath you justly deserve has instead accomplished all that is necessary for your repentance and forgiveness. He offers terms of peace: be saved by Jesus to serve Jesus and suffer with Jesus until you are glorified with Jesus. Will you accept these terms? Will you obey the gospel?

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

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Acts chapter 5, beginning in verse 17 and going through verse 41, these are the words of God, then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees. And they were filled with indignation and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said go stand in the temple and speak to the people. All the words of this life.

And when they heard that they entered the temple, early 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 and sent to the present to have them brought. But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported saying, Indeed, we found the prison shut securely and the guards standing outside before the doors.

But when we opened them we found no one inside. Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them saying, look the men whom you put in, prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.

Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence for they feared. The people what? They should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council and the high priest asked them saying, Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name and look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood on us.

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said We ought to obey God rather than men the God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be prince and Savior. To give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

And we are His witnesses to these things. And so also is the Holy Spirit. Him God has given to those who obey Him.

When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 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. And he said to them, men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men for some time ago, Theodis rose up claiming to be somebody.

A number of men, about 400 joined him. He was slain and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing after 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 is of men, it will come to nothing. But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it. Let's you even be found to fight against God and they agreed with him.

And when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

So they departed from the presence of the Council Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer, shame for his name. Amen. These, we see that.

One of the things that little boys seem to know intuitively and discover quickly is that, it's a desirable thing for boys to have muscles for boys to have strength. This desirable for women too. The Lord indeed calls the daughters of Jerusalem corner, pillars. Not just for beauty but also for strength. But sometimes you'll see a scene sort of like this one.

A number of four-year-old boys. And one six-year-old boy, who has had 33% more extra uteral development than the four-year-old boys have and he makes a great big muscle maybe even to intimidate the four-year-old, boys. Of course, this great big muscle, is basically a pencil under the skin that highlights just how much bone his arm really is behind.

That little subcutaneous pencil of his, but he's sure it's big and the four-year-olds, get the message. And every once in a while, you'll have a wise genuinely above average muscular, dad, who all stoop down, he'll put his hands on his four-year-old's, waist and smile at the flexing six-year-old. As he picks up his four-year-old and his arms and that man does not skip has curls or whatever compound movement that he has at the gym for working on the biceps.

And there's no necessarily intentional flexing and yet the feel and the sight of what the real muscles look. Like are all the comfort that the four-year-old needs And if the six year old had the wisdom, he usually doesn't, he would see how ridiculous he looked of flexing in front of the daddy of the four-year-old.

Much of the providence of God to his church is like that the six-year-old people of the world seeming to be something flexing, their tiny little pencils under the skin on their scrawny little arms while the infinitely almighty. Father of his children in the world has continuously picking them up.

I mean his arms and the muscles are just there. These words before us, this morning are recorded for us to show us the great strength of the God, who is not only saving His people. But even offering salvation to his enemies, which is how we begin. And there's a little bit of overlap in the way that we've organized to hear this word preached.

So, didn't put verse numbers on the main points themselves. But basically the four things that we see in the passage are God's strength, His putting his sovereign grace in bold letters and some places he puts the sovereign part in boldface and other places, he puts the grace parked in boldface, but he shows us his strength.

He also shows us that those whom he saves. He makes into His servants that if you know the strength of God who has saved you, You're glad to be in the service of this. God, who is still working by that strength? The third place, we'll hear by God's help about God's salvation that it is salvation.

Not for those who are not worthy of being condented with those who needed that salvation precisely because they are worthy of all condemnation. And then the fourth place. What? Both for alliteration and exposition we have called God's spy Gamaliel. Does not seem to be on the side of the apostles.

He puts them out of the room and yet God's agents are never out of the room, whatever back rooms or board rooms or smoke-filled rooms or council rooms. In this case There are God Himself is not without his agent and there's always working in them to display the glory of his strength and carry forth, the work of applying the Salvation of Jesus and we could close in prayer.

But the point of preaching is that we would engage God who shows us these things and proclaims to us. These things, by means of the words in which He teaches them. So in the first place God's strength, the text gives us a an emphasis on the flexing of the wicked, as it were with a couple small words, Then the high priest rose up and all those who were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees.

In verse 17, They were filled with indignation. They laid their hands on the apostles, They put them in the common prison and then the council comes together again in verse 21, with all the elders of the children of Israel. There's a power play, a power move here, It's in response in part.

I think in the flow of the text, it's been a couple of weeks because of how we ended up doing the the previous passage in its in response in part to the miracles that God was giving to be done through the hands of the apostles. He's signs and wonders.

That verse 12 describes and all being healed, both from sickness and being tormented by demons in verse 16 And it seems like the enemies of Christ. And his gospel, never get the point that there is almighty divine strength. You remember what they decided to do? After Jesus had raised Lazarus

from the dead and many people meeting Lazarus had led to many people at least intellectually from my standpoint of agreement.

Believing that Jesus is the Christ. They said, oh what are we gonna do? Everyone's believing in him because of this man that he raised from the dead. Well, let's kill him, too. The man that Jesus had just raised from the dead children, the world really is like the sophomoric or maybe just morick six-year-old flexing his muscles and not realizing that.

There's such a thing as a real strength and it belongs to God. And not men. Even the raging of the nations can only accomplish. What God's hand and purpose of determined beforehand for them to do. He saw that, not too many verses ago in verse 27:28, referring to or explaining applying.

Psalm 2 of chapter in chapter 4, verses 27 to 28 for truly against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles. And the people of Israel were gathered together to do, whatever your hand and your purpose. Determined before to be done. What is really going on?

Well, Nobody knows. Nobody on earth knows. We went through a couple generations of the illusion that men understand or know about what is going on. Even those who try to plan for it to happen, much of that has been blown up as people realize that those in news media are sinners and liars and some of us still haven't got the message.

We just align ourselves with other, sinners and liars, who tell us what we want to hear. And there is in a greater and lesser reliability of what people say, But even, we don't even really know what's going on in our own hearts. And our own minds our own households much of the time.

But Christians, know, Christians know what's going on. And what's happening, whatever God's hand, and God's purpose have determined beforehand should happen because God's hand and God's purpose. We're bringing Christ into the world as he had been promised to suffer. And after three days rise again, from the dead and God's hand, and God's purpose had determined beforehand, that repentance and remission of sins would be preached in his name.

To all the nations beginning a Jerusalem. Some of you probably the children, your memories are better than your parents. Say. That sounds familiar and that sounds familiar to you because not too long ago. We're at the end of Luke 24. And the risen Jesus was telling his apostles that this is what is going on.

This is what God is doing. Now, the details of how that comes about, we don't know that much about, but we do know that that is what he is doing. And so when the wicked flex, That's what's happening. Psalm 11 could be. And one of those horrible modifications of the Bible, where they miss translate things on purpose to make, even the linguistic aspect of it more palatable to the God resisting heart of men, You could title Psalm 11, perhaps, what happens when the wicked flex, when the foundations are destroyed and they're saying run fly.

Not run Fly to the mountains like a little bird. You believe her and what can the righteous do? Then as the big question of Psalm 11, and the answer is keep trusting in God and keep trusting in Him especially to obey Him because he's still sitting on his throne, the wicked are foolish flexors before the eyes.

And in that song, even the eyelids of God who looks upon the sons of men and who hates all evil. And yet he is a God of mercy to those who trust in him and he saves them in his grace. What is happening on the wicked Flex? God is still carrying out his almighty saving, purpose in the world and in every circumstance.

Why an angel here? Why doesn't God just teleport the, the apostles out of the prison, he's gonna do it to fill up, right? In a couple of chapters Philip is going to finish helping the Ethiopian eunuch and then he's going to disappear and reappear almost a hundred miles away.

Why doesn't he just teleport them? Well in part to show by the comparative ease of what happens that the apostles as this one. Angel leads them out of the prison. Apparently past sleeping guards and through locked doors, maybe they unlock and re-lock who knows? It doesn't tell us The point in verse 19 is that it's just so simple and so easy.

But at night, and angel of the Lord, open the prison doors. Oh, there you go. He opened the prison doors and brought them out and said go stand in the temple and speak to the people. All the words of this life, it's very, very simple and understated, isn't it?

Here you have the Council and they're all gathered together and they're planning and plotting angel just walks in walks them out. One with God is always in the majority often. This has happened throughout the history of the God's people in the Bible. How very many times. It seemed that everything hung by a thread.

One faithful man left or one critical moment where it seemed as if anything could go wrong and often it has happened throughout Church history, and often in the lives of individual believers and particular households and congregations. It has seemed like everything is hanging by the most slender of threads.

Well, the physicists will tell you doesn't matter how slender the thread is if it has a tensile strength of infinity.

If the thread is sustained by employed by the living God and His Almighty power, then it can bear all of the weight. And so that is perhaps the reason they're given to see the angel. The other reason, of course, is that they are being given a message but will come to that in a moment.

When we think about them as God's servants Note against this power of God and the the great ease and simplicity with which the angel leads them out, and tells them what to do, and they go do it. They enter they get up early in the morning you know, as ordinarily as stated.

As you might tell your friend that you meet for lunch up, got up early. Today went into the temple. Started teaching, they get up early in the morning, they just go do what they're doing. And then you have again this more intense and plotting and raging, the energy seems to be on the side of verse 21, the high priests and those with him came and called the council together with all the elders of the children of Israel and sent to the prison, to have them brought.

And so there's there's all of this buildup in verse 21 and they're already. They've arranged themselves in their chamber, with their counsel, and all the people that they want ready to bring in the prisoners. What verses 22 through. 26 are just full of the cluelessness and helplessness of these men who seem to be so strong.

The officers come. They do not find them in the prison verse 22, they return and report verse 23. And there, they make sure because these are the officers of, of the guards and it's their neck on the line, they make sure it include the details. That none of the prison procedures were overlooked?

We found the prison shut securely. The guards standing outside before the doors, But we open them. We found no one inside. Now when the height priests the captain of the temple and the chief priest heard, these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. Do you know who's not wondering what the outcome will?

Be God. Do you know who else? Isn't wondering? What the outcome will be. The apostles, They've been told by Jesus. What to do, and they are doing it. And his gospel, remission of sins. A repentance and remission of sins. Must be preached in all the world, So, they're enterprise.

They're work is sure. Ultimately to succeed They're going to start dying soon but what they're participating in is not going to die, it's going to succeed. You know who else doesn't wonder you deer hearing congregation because the living God has recorded these events for you by the hands of men.

So that you would know that God never wonders with the outcome will be and that whatever part he has given you and however long he gives you to be in it. If you are participating in the work of this, God, it must succeed. It must succeed, the wondering is really left for people like the captain of the temple and the chief priests in verse 24.

So one came and told them verse 25 saying, look the men whom you put in prisoners standing in the temple of teaching the people, Then The captain with the officers went with the officers and brought them without violence. Now you don't pick scrawny guys I guess this is the muscle sermon.

You don't pick scrawny guys to be the temple guard or the captain of the temple guard. These are the guys who are supposed to intimidate the crowds, right? And you got crowds who come with a religious fervor to Jerusalem three times a year. Even in Rome, the people were known as a rebellious people who loved to have uprising.

The guys on this detail are the kind of guys that are selected in part for intimidation factor. But who's intimidated in? Verse 26, it's the captain in the officers. They fear. The people lest they should be stoned. So you have this emphasis from verse 22, all the way to verse 26 on the comparative cluelessness and helplessness of Godless man before the Almighty strength of God.

In fact, when the when the council says, did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name, the apostles reply in part verse 31 him. God has exalted. Sorry the it's 31. A, if you're following along the outline, if they, by their murdering Jesus verse 30 could not keep him in the grave, What can they do to Jesus's apostles or disciples that the Lord Jesus will not overcome.

They want an answer to the question. Why are they out there teaching? And answer. Number one, will get in verse 29, but part of the answer is the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, verse 30 and him. God has exalted to his right hand Verse 31. Why aren't you doing what we commanded?

You do verse 28. The answer is because someone far stronger than you has commanded us to do something else. The ultimate display of God's strength is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, we come to know the power of His resurrection and we didn't even plan to try to take the time but Romans 6 and other places we come to know the power of his resurrection.

Especially as we put sin to death. As sin is no longer master over us because we were united at Jesus, not just in his death, but in his resurrection. And so, as we offer, our bodies is living sacrifices as we offer our members, every part of who we are as slaves of God for righteousness, we're walking not by how much more resolved, we are to obey, God, because now we've heard good stuff and we are church members.

And we are going to be better. No Sanctification. Doesn't progress in the flesh, progresses in the spirit, who's applying to us, the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. And we're often frustrated by how little there has been. But when there has been any genuine sanctification at all, we become evidences of and tasters of the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you are meant by your sanctification.

Not to be stuck at the end of Romans, 7 asking who will save me from the body of this death. But to be rejoicing, thanks be to God. That it is the Holy Spirit, who has led you so that you are putting to death, the deeds of the body and you are alive and will live forever.

That the small part that you have thus far whatever other role you have. If you're a believer, you have in part the role of killing your remaining sin and it may be slow going now. But it will be completed going later. And the whole fallen creation is eager for what you will be when it is done and Jesus Christ rising from the dead.

Is proved by the fact that the fruit of what can only happen by his resurrection is actually happening. And believers.

The God of our Father's raised up Jesus him. God has exalted to his right hand and he is the one who's poured out that Holy Spirit verse 32. So first God's strength, the second God's servants, When you belong to God, and he belongs to you, you're a servant. God doesn't become our master to do, whatever we want him to do, Many people present to the gospel.

This way, they say there are all these things that you want in your life and you are are not able to produce them, but God will produce them for you. If you say this prayer and make this decision, you ask him into your heart.

He doesn't become our master in order to do whatever we want him to do. That is upside down and backwards and frankly, that would be a horrible condemnation and punishment to have the living. God give you over to all of your desires. No, He takes us as His servants, so that we may have the privilege of doing what he says, and willingly participating in what he is.

Doing Repentance is a gift. Obedience is a privilege. Holiness. Is not something that we are to strain towards out of this misery over how bad we still feel ourselves to be. By all means have a right view of the wickedness of your remaining sin. But holiness is a resurrection powered, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, attended participation in that work.

That ends with the creation, no longer groaning and the Christian no longer groaning. And the spirit no longer groaning because those whom he justified, he will have, then glorified.

And so, if you're God's servant, you do whatever he says to do, There's no sense That there's a question in their hearts between the end of verse 20. And the beginning of verse 21 is there angel has come not just to deliver Apostles, out of a prison, but a message to the apostles, go stand in the temple and speak to the people.

All the words of this life, the life that is so great. That the messenger is stronger than all of the enemies put together. And when they heard that they entered the temple, early in the morning and taught, Oh, dear Christian. Did God not save you so that every time you come to the Word, you can say speak.

Now, for your servant is listening, God of my salvation. God who made me and who redeemed me? Just let me know what to do and independence upon your own power grant that I would do it. God only saves people whom he's making into servants. He does not save you to become your servant.

In fact, if you think you're in charge, you're not the Council thinks they're in charge. At the end of Virtual 21, we've already mentioned that. And they restated at the beginning of verse 28, did we not strictly command. You not to teach in this name, don't you know we're in charge and we told you what to do.

They're not actually in charge. Are they all who are going to forward? He must remember that. There is no authority given to any man except that it is given by God, The mid-level Roman Centurion. When he was talking to Jesus said I too am a man under authority and that's why I can tell this one go there and he goes and do this other one do this and he does Why.

Because behind that mid level Centurion. There is all of the authority of Rome. Well, the Bible teaches us, the behind all of authority of men. There is any authority of men. There is all the authority of God. Therefore, whatever position of authority. You have whether it's in your home, or in the church, or in the civil society.

It's purposes are defined by God. And it's limits are set by God. You may be in charge Little C. He's in charge capital C. And if you think that your home is yours to run as UC Fit or your congregation is yours to run as you see fit or your community or your nation is yours to run as you see fit, then you're wrong because God's in charge and those who think that their authority is limitless and absolute have just undercut whatever authority they thought they had because God who is in charge will undercut you will undermine you and you may even end up with people who don't just rebel against you because of the way that you exercise your authority, they may rebel against you because they have to obey the authority.

That is above you. Who sits on the throne of glory. We all think about the nation and we say, amen. But think about your home too. And don't you ever put your wife or your children in a position where they actually have to start? Weighing does obeying Jesus mean I have to stop obeying dad right now or husband right now.

No, we must be God's servants. The Apostles are God's servants, No matter who else seems to be in charge, God is in charge of you. And that's the point of verse 29, isn't it? They rattle their sabers. Assert their authority in verse 28. Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name but Peter and the other apostles answered and said we ought to obey God rather than men.

In other words, you exercise your authority to the point where rebellion became required



There is a point at which wrongly held authority. Get gets to a place where for Christians who are under. It rebellion is required. Not permissible required. They had a command from God and they must fulfill it And this was the second time. They told him this back in Chapter 4 verse 19.

They said we must obey. God rather than men. God's servants God's servants by God's strength. Actually can take a pleasure from the pain of being persecuted for his sake. If you are a servant of Jesus, there are two things going on here. One. Your mission doesn't fail. Even if you are killed because your mission as part of his mission and number two, is He carried out his part on earth by suffering and you actually get fellowship with him being made into his likeness to some extent.

This is what he's talking about and not just Matthew 5:11 and 12 but especially in first Peter 4 verses 12 through 16. Blessed, are you when they revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake, not just bluster you now. And yeah tell yourself there there.

No verse 12, Matthew 5 rejoice and be exceedingly. Glad for great is your reward in heaven for. So they persecuted the prophets who were before you 1st Peter 4 verses 12 through 16. Beloved, do not think at a strain, do not think it's strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as though some strange thing has happened to you.

But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings. There's no atoning value to your suffering, but you do get to suffer as you do. That part which he has laid out before you. And when you suffer, you get to have a fellowship with the Lord Jesus who himself said what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour. No. But for this purpose I have come so that when his glory is revealed you also you may also be glad with exceeding joy if you are reproached for the name of Christ. Blessed, are you for the Spirit of glory and the spirit of God rests upon you Remember, Ananias and Sapphira from last week and one of the things that people in the church need the most is to know the Holy Spirit in his glory, and in his power, and in his love as our companion.

And so all of the frowns and scowls of those in the world who seem to be something those you may see and hear with your eyes and your ears, But the presence of the Holy Spirit with you, God himself, who is the one? Who makes the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to shine in your heart and the face of Jesus Christ?

He is the Spirit of glory and the spirit of God and he rests upon you on their part. He is blasphemed, but on your party is glorified, but let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer or as a busy body, and other people's matters yet.

If anyone suffers as a Christian let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in this matter. Now, why spend so much time on that? Well, because children, when we were your age, we heard things like, what does, What does our right? Right to sin cost, you it doesn't hurt you.

If we're just allowed to continue in what the Bible calls abominable perversions and toleration became acceptance. Became praise of the perversion became demand for approval and you are growing up in a world where those who disobey God's law, see you as a danger to their way of life to what they live for and love and to the functioning of their society.

We are not very far in the arc of how it happens. We are not very far from the point at which just acknowledging yourself to be a biblical. Christian is enough reason for you to be censured. Attacked punished So don't suffer as a murderer or a thief and evil doer or a busybody, But there may be a time soon where not just for doing Christian things, but even for saying, yes, I'm a Christian, You may suffer, My dad grew up with this in Egypt.

A little bit different situation But his name is one that you could. There are some names that are all you know only Christians have them and other names that only Muslims have them and he was in an interview that was going to determine a scholarship or what school he would be placed in and he could tell that the panel was fishing.

This. This Nabil guy that could be either one as he Muslim or is he Christian? And as soon as he figured out, they were fishing. He said, Abdul Masi servant of the Christ. Why? Because if he was going to suffer, He wanted it to be because he was a Christian.

When God saves you, He makes you His servants and you should have pleasure not only in doing what he says, but the kind of pleasure they have in verse 41 rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for. And this is one of those rare places where the majority text and the TR diverge for the name of Jesus as how verse 41 concludes in persecution.

For righteousness, we receive honor worthy to suffer and we receive fellowship with Christ. For the name of Jesus that sweet fellowship. We have in him. Can you hear when someone says something, like Abdul Messiah, not just. I'm unashamed of his name, but he suffered for who he was and I have a fellowship with him when I get to suffer for who he is God's strength.

God's servants in the third place, God's salvation. You know, we should all be concerned as they seem to be concerned. Although they were, they had concern light and verse 28. And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood on us. The Council had a hint of how big their problem was.

They were guilty of the blood of Jesus But they had no idea how big the problem actually was because the issue was not what the residents of Jerusalem might do with this doctrine. I mean, the captain and the officers are worried about that in the councils worried about that But if these things are true, the biggest issue is what will God do about it.

Now there has been a real issue throughout the centuries of those who recognized What Israel at this time by their leaders did to the Christ and have had a vengeful spirit rather than the brokenhearted pleading of the apostle. To the Gentiles wishing that he could be anathema that he could go to hell in order for his countrymen by of, according to the flesh, to be converted.

But anti-Semitism is not the biggest problem that the Jews have The biggest problem they have is not what man would do about it. But what God would do about it And Jesus prophesied, what the Romans would do in 870 and it happens. But even that is not to be compared to the hell that they deserve, and that dear parents and elders and neighbors is how we need to talk to our children, and our congregations, and our communities, about their sin because they're always worried.

Aren't they about what discipline am I going to get for this right now. And you know what's gonna happen with me as far as the records of the churchgo? And especially, you know, a lot of people don't really care about that. But my name and reputation among the people in the church but sin deserves hell.

There are no little lies. There are no little stealings, There are no little hateful words or actions that are murder and we come to our children and we can explain to them how they've disrupted the functioning of the household but we must tell them. Here's what you did. And here's what the law of God.

Says about it and everything exists for him and for his glory and his wrath against what you did, his anger and hatred for that lying, it's so great. That the place that we see it, most clearly is not even hell itself. But the burning of the wrath of God upon the Son of God on the cross, which is why you don't have to go to hell, even though you've just committed treason against the God of the universe, which is why I'm telling you this, because he has appointed mom and dad to tell you about your sin and to tell you about his salvation and he's appointed the rod not that there's value to the pain on your bottom, but because the God who put Himself on the cross and suffered, the wrath himself is the one that we hope will bring you to see this in will bring you to hate to sin will bring you to trust the Savior so that it won't do.

Like celebrity, PCA pastors might do, or maybe celebrity ARP pastors. I could say that but there's really no such thing except for whoever's the preaching pastor at first to Columbia but we don't get on the talk show and get asked about homosexuality and say, well, you know everybody's got their sins, it's really not such a big deal and God gives it a place in the Bible as the kind of self-destructive counterrational sin, that he gives us over to.

Because we're already under his wrath and that He abominates it And then you can say all of our sins deserve that wrath That one is especially horrible to catch our attention And if we pretended it was no big deal. Then we would be missing the role that it has and telling us that all sin is an infinitely, big deal.

You say, look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood on us. How do the apostles respond? No, no, no. We don't want to bring his blood on you. We're not accusing you of having been complicit with Rome. We were no. They say the God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

They don't diminish, they don't shrink. Because the sinner says you're telling us our sin is a lot bigger deal than it really is. They said well actually you have no idea how big a deal it is. But him, God has exalted His right hand to be prince and Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

You see the way they respond. So yes, your sin is every bit as big as you imagine to be and much bigger, But the salvation of God, the Son become man. Lived died rose again, sitting on the throne. Having poured out his spirit, that salvation is even for you.

The church does no one, any favors when it backs off? As soon as they resist being told that they're guilty But then we speak even more plainly about their sin and more biblically about their sin Then we can speak more greatly about the salvation that is offered to them.

By the very God, they've sinned against

So, essential part of parenting is an essential part of all discipling. It's an essential part of evangelism.

And they present answering the greatness of sin as the power and purpose of the exaltation of Christ Him. God has exalted to his right hand. No creature sits on the throne. That's all right. Hand of God, no mere creature. There's one who added that creatureliness to himself that he is.

Also creator is still the same Lord in Christ preaching, the exaltation to the right hand, He's Lord. He's the one who pours, out the spirit, He's the one and whose name you call to be saved. But he's also the Christ, the prince and the Savior, the the king and the deliverer.

And what does he do? As Lord of Christ, He gives repentance and forgiveness of sins. Beginning specifically, with his murderers, They emphasize here to Israel and in a sense, Israel is sitting in front of them because it's not just the leaders of the Sadducees and the priestly party and the leaders of the Pharisees and the Pharisee party.

But even all the elders of Israel says, we're not trying to bring his blood down on your heads. You've done that all by yourselves, but we are messengers of the one whose blood of whose blood you are guilty. And His message is peace. His message is repentance. His message is forgiveness, even for you.

And so, we're here offering the terms of peace.

He has sent us as preachers. We are His witnesses to these things. It's not just us who call you to be saved The apostles. Say their emissaries of Christ witnesses of Christ. He's the one who's calling them to be saved The doctrine of ordination not just of Apostles but also of elders is not at its core.

Some kind of power. Grab, Yes. There are elders and leaders of churches throughout the centuries who have abused their power. And we've addressed them to some extent already in this passage, But the fact that you have ordained officers in the church set, apart by Christ, to do, the work that Christ has appointed them.

And to preach the message that Christ has appointed. Means that when you hear me say Jesus offers you peace by His blood of which you are guilty, It's not just me. It's Jesus who appointed me? Who addresses you and offers you to become His servant to suffer with him by his strength and know that you will be glorified with him and that all his enemies and yours, then will be destroyed and he sent not just preachers but also the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit doesn't just work through the hands of the apostles. Many signs and wonders verse 12, but he gives the obedience of faith verse 32. He sends His Spirit on all who believe Note that the gospel is something to be obeyed. Whom God has given to those who obey Him verse 32.

The terms of peace are not just to hear the gospel, not just to agree with the facts of the gospel but to obey it to yield yourself to the Lord. Jesus Christ to receive him as your king and know that he is your Savior. And the one who sits on a very throne of God.

And yet they respond to this message of forgiveness and this offer of the Spirit verse 33. When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.

If the Lord Jesus offers, you terms of peace, through his appointed preacher, Be careful your respond to the preacher, and the message God's salvation in the last place. God's spy. And you can see that this one's much shorter. You remember David was not able to be in the councils of Absalom.

Any new hit he fell against him. God raised up Hushai and Hushai. I went and frustrated. The councils of a hit. The first second Samuel, 16 and 17. Remember the clerk in Ephesus or maybe you don't, but you will a few months time when we get to chapter 19 and how you had this, this several hour raging riot against the Christians.

And God used a political nerd who you know he pulled out the rules for how you're supposed to have meetings and and he said we don't have any good reason for gathering and we are possibly under accusation of rioting and suddenly all of that danger to to the Christians evaporated in the crowd just went home.

God has an agent in every room. He has trillions of agents in every room. There is no molecule or subatomic particle in any back room or counsel or smoke-filled room and which God is not already working. And he shows us that they put them, Gamaliel has them. Put out of the room, he apparently doesn't want them to know that.

He's the, he's the one defending them, but God is going to use him. And I hope you could hear even when we were reading versus 35, through 38, and the council that he gives how he says, men men over again, he uses both the the male specific word for man, especially a particularly when he dresses the council first, he uses that word with them.

But he also uses the word, that means mere human, and he several instances of it instances of it. But the point is that what men say in due to one another, you know, rises and falls. But what God does that endures?

So, God uses the greatest of the Pharisee teachers to deliver his saints. God has his spies in every situation to work according to his sovereign strength for his saving purpose. So, the big takeaway is that the God whose wrath you justly deserve has instead accomplished all that is necessary for your repentance and for your forgiveness and he sends you his messenger and the promised attendance of his spirit.

As he offers you, the terms of feasts be saved by Jesus to serve, Jesus and suffer with Jesus until you are glorified with Jesus. And the question is not, Did you make a decision? Once The question is, have you accepted? These terms has the Spirit given you to yield to Christ.

So he is your Savior and your king and you are His servant. Have you obeyed the gospel, man? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you have not left us in our state of sin and misery in which we deserve your wrath and hell forever, but that you have saved us by Redeemer and the Redeemer.

As your son, We pray O. God for any who have not accepted the terms that they would respond rightly to the announcement of the Savior, and his terms. And they would yield themselves to him and we pray. Lord for all of us that you would make us more and more faithful servants and give us more and more confidence in the strength of our master and the success of his mission that you would make us so Christian that when we suffer for the name of Christ, we may rejoice that we had both that honor and that fellowship with him and his name we ask it.

Amen.