



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

ACTS



Acts #8 – 5:12-42

Acts 5:41– Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **Tri Church Summit Dates: 25th–27th May.** Registration and Payment now due!
 - **No Sunday Church Service on 27th May**



#8 ACTS 5:12-42

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

In this passage we see the apostles continue to walk in amazing acts of power, resulting again in their arrest, and this time, in physical beatings by the Sanhedrin as well as threats. The apostles however, respond in an unbelievable way: with rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer.

Acts 5:12-42 Many Signs and Wonders Done

¹² Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³ None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles Arrested and Freed

¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." ²¹ And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²² But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, ²³ "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." ²⁴ Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. ²⁵ And someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you



put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.”²⁶ Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them,²⁸ saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.”²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

³³ When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.³⁴ But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honour by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.³⁵ And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.³⁶ For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.³⁷ After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.³⁸ So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail;³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice,⁴⁰ and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name.⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Romans 5:3 *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

James 1:2-4 *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Romans 8:28-30 *²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*



APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **STUDY:** Read 5:12-42
 - a. What do you notice about these events that are similar to chapters 3 and 4?
[**Leaders Notes:** Miracles are performed, the gospel is preached, the apostles are arrested and thrown in prison, and the apostles refuse to bow to threats and pressure and continue to preach boldly!]
 - b. What was Peter's response to the threats? What do you notice?
 - c. What do you make of Gamaliel's advice? Was he right?
3. **DISCUSS:** The apostles rejoiced that they were found worthy to suffer for Jesus' name. How could it be an honour for them (and us) to be dishonoured?
4. **APPLY:** What gives you hope when you walk through difficulties?

Jimmy's four points here were:

- a) Know that Jesus suffered before us
 - b) Know that through suffering we grow and mature as disciples
 - c) Know that God uses all things to make us more like Jesus
 - d) Know that a glorious future awaits those who endure until the end.
5. **STUDY:** Read Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-4. What do they have to say about the purpose of our suffering?
 6. **APPLY:** Are you currently walking through a season of suffering? Bring your burdens to the group and ask for prayer for a heart full of joy, hope and endurance.

PRAY

Thank God for the work and power of the Holy Spirit and pray that we would understand Him more deeply and rely on Him more fully.

HELPFUL NOTES

NOTES ON KEY TEXTS

Acts 2:14–5:42 The Witness in Jerusalem. Beginning with Peter's sermon at Pentecost and continuing through ch. 5, the witness of the Christians is confined to the city of Jerusalem and restricted to Jews.

Acts 4:32–5:16 The Community Shares Together. The second extensive "summary" in Acts deals with the practice of fellow believers sharing goods (see 2:43–44). Luke describes their practice and holds



forth Barnabas as a model (4:32–37), followed by the account of the abuse of the practice by Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11). A final summary highlights the growth of the community and its experience with the Spirit’s power (5:12–16).

Acts 5:12–16 This summary centers on the Holy Spirit’s activity in the apostles’ healing ministry.

Acts 5:12 The Christians had prayed for God to grant them the power to perform signs and wonders (cf. 4:30). This was mightily fulfilled through the apostles, especially in the temple area of Solomon’s Portico, where the Christians often witnessed (3:11). A “portico” (Gk. *stoa*) is a covered walkway (cf. 3:11; John 5:2; 10:23).

Acts 5:13 None of the rest dared join them. Some take the antecedent of “them” to be “the whole church” in v. 13 and understand “they” in v. 12 as referring to all the believers. Others understand “them” to be “the apostles” in v. 13 and understand “they” in v. 12 to refer to the apostles as well. The Greek grammar allows for either interpretation. The first interpretation would show that unbelievers were afraid to attach themselves to the church unless they were truly converted. The second interpretation would show the unique authority and miraculous power of the apostles.

Acts 5:15 his shadow might fall on some of them. Though this may seem strange to modern readers, it indicates that the Holy Spirit was so powerfully manifested in and around Peter that even those who only came near him experienced the healing of the Holy Spirit (cf. 19:12).

Acts 5:17–42 The Apostles Appear before the Council. Just as Peter’s healing of the lame man provoked a trial before the Sanhedrin (3:1–4:22), once again the apostolic miracles precipitated a trial, this time of all the apostles.

Acts 5:17 filled with jealousy. These Sadducees were “jealous” not for God’s honor or for the advancement of his kingdom but for retaining their own influence and power (this theme is repeated later; see 7:9; 13:45; 17:5).

Acts 5:20 The words of this Life means the words of salvation and eternal life. It seems that early Christianity may also have been called “the Life,” as well as “the Way”.

Acts 5:21 It was daybreak, and a crowd would be gathering at the temple for the morning sacrifices. The council and all the senate are two names for the same group, the Sanhedrin (“council” translates Gk. *synedrion*, “Sanhedrin”).

Acts 5:30 hanging him on a tree.. The allusion is to Deut. 21:22–23.

Acts 5:33 On the Jews’ pattern of resistance (cf. 7:51; 12:1–3; 13:45; 25:7; 28:24)

Acts 5:34 The lone voice in the Sanhedrin to speak against an immediate death sentence was that of Gamaliel. He was the most prominent rabbi of his day and the teacher of Paul (22:3). He belonged to the Pharisaic minority on the Sanhedrin but had considerable influence.

Acts 5:36 Gamaliel cited two examples from Jewish history to support his basic argument that movements not backed by God always come to nothing. Both examples were failed movements, the



first being that of a revolutionary named Theudas, and the second that of “Judas the Galilean” (v. 37), who is said to have come “after him.” Judas the Galilean is well known, having led a tax revolt in A.D. 6 (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.23), and this is evidently the person to whom Gamaliel is referring. Although there is no historical record of the “Theudas” mentioned here (other than this statement by Gamaliel), most likely this “Theudas” was one of many otherwise unknown leaders of such movements following the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C. Although Jewish historian Josephus (writing in A.D. 95 in *Jewish Antiquities* 20.97) mentions someone named “Theudas” who led a movement at a later date (A.D. 44–46), it is clear that Josephus’s reference is to a different person, since the movement to which he refers occurred many years after the speech by Gamaliel (c. A.D. 30 or 33).

Acts 5:40 This time the Sanhedrin enforced their command by scourging the apostles. The text does not say whether it was with the maximum of 39 stripes prescribed by Jewish law (see 2 Cor. 11:24) or with fewer stripes. The lashing consisted of striking the victim’s bare skin with a tripled strip of calf’s hide. The victim received two blows to the back, then one to the chest. Thus each cycle had to be divisible by three, which explains the maximum limit of 39—one less than the 40 prescribed in Deut. 25:3.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left rejoicing at being considered worthy to suffer for their witness in Jesus’ name, which they boldly resumed despite the Sanhedrin’s threat. Their suffering paradoxically resulted in the growth of the church (6:1). Suffering for the name of Jesus is a characteristic theme in Acts.

Rom. 5:3–4 The people of God rejoice not only in future glory but in present trials and sufferings, not because trials are pleasant but because they produce a step-by-step transformation that makes believers more like Christ.

Rom. 5:5 Followers of Christ have no reason to fear humiliation on the judgment day, for they now belong to God. Indeed, they know that they have received God’s love because the Holy Spirit poured his love into their hearts at conversion.

James 1:2–4 Joy in Trials. Trials are designed to produce spiritual maturity and should therefore be counted as joy.

James 1:2 Trials are “tests” that challenge faith (vv. 2–5). When trials occur, one should count it all joy—not meaning mere worldly, temporal happiness, but rather spiritual, enduring, “complete joy” in the Lord who is sovereign over all things, including trials.

James 1:3 Testing of your faith defines the meaning of a trial for the Christian: as Jesus was “tested” in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–13), so believers are tested. The Greek *dokimion* (“testing”) denotes a positive test intended to make one’s faith “genuine” (cf. 1 Pet. 1:7). The result is steadfastness, a life of faithful endurance amid troubles and afflictions.

James 1:4 Steadfastness leads ultimately to perfection. Believers grow in holiness but are not yet perfected in it; such perfection will be realized only when Jesus returns.



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Rom. 8:28 God weaves everything together for good for his children. The “good” in this context does not refer to earthly comfort but conformity to Christ (v. 29), closer fellowship with God, bearing good fruit for the kingdom, and final glorification (v. 30).

Rom. 8:29 Verses 29–30 explain why those who believe in Christ can be assured that all things work together for good: God has always been doing good for them, starting before creation (the distant past), continuing in their conversion (the recent past), and then on to the day of Christ’s return (the future). Foreknew reaches back to the OT, where the word “know” emphasizes God’s special choice of, or covenantal affection for, his people (e.g., Gen. 18:19; Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2). See Rom. 11:2, where “foreknew” functions as the contrast to “rejected,” showing that it emphasizes God’s choosing his people (see also 1 Pet. 1:2, 20). God also predestined (i.e., predetermined) that those whom he chose beforehand would become like Christ.

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.