

A Covert Attack

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Bible Text: Luke 20:19-26

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Take your Bibles and let's go to Luke 20 as we continue going through the Gospel of Luke. We are in the last week of our Lord's earthly ministry, the week before he was crucified and he's teaching in the synagogue and being constantly affronted and attacked by his enemies. No, his enemies were not the Greek, Roman, secular philosophers and secular progressives of the day, his enemies were those who claimed to be Jehovah's worshipers. His enemies were those who held the Bible in their hands, quoted Scripture, and yet they had totally lost the truth of the Scripture they quoted.

So we come to Luke 20, beginning in verse 19. Does it say 20 on the screen? It should be 19. We call this "A Covert Attack." Luke 20:19,

19 The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them. 20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor. 21 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 23 But He detected their trickery and said to them, 24 "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." 25 And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.

A covert attack. That's exactly what's happening here. I. Notice the great divide. The great divide. In verse 19 and really throughout Scripture, we see that God's word spares no effort in pointing out the very deep hypocritical evil that can lurk behind a religious facade, so clear in these religious authorities in Israel. These religious authorities who are supposed to be the guardians of God's people and the standard bearers of truth are but the poster boys for religious hypocrisy and religious deception. Verse 19 points out that these religious authorities understood the parable he had just finished teaching, before you get to our text today, was about them. You remember the parable was about the evil vine

growers. It was about a landowner who planted a vineyard, then he rented the vineyard out to tenant farmers, vine growers, and he would send a slave every year to receive his portion of the profits, but every year they would abuse the slave and send him back with nothing. Then finally in the parable, Jesus says the landowner says, "I'll send my son, my one and only son, and surely they will respect him." So the son goes and the evil vine growers said, "Hey, this is the heir. I'll tell you what let's do, let's kill him. Let's murder him and then we'll have everything for ourselves." So they murder him, thinking they're going to gain all the inheritance themselves.

So Jesus taught that publicly in front of all the people and everyone including the religious authorities knew it was about them. They were the evil vine growers, so once again, Jesus has very strongly and openly exposed them and condemned them before all the people. So as Jesus is the standard bearer of truth and righteousness, these religious authorities of the day are the standard bearers for religious hypocrisy and compromise.

So Jesus here comes into the synagogue of Jerusalem, a place where the word of God is taught, and he teaches and immediately, in effect, Jesus starts a church fight. That's indeed what happened. Now, we understand he didn't really cause it because if they had been honoring the truth and loved the truth, they would have loved what he was saying. So they are really the culprits but, nevertheless, they had been going on the way they were doing and teaching what they had been teaching and believing what they had been believing for many generations and here this renegade, if you will, from Nazareth, from Galilee, the lower class, the uneducated crowd, he comes out of that group, burst into Jerusalem and starts all these problems. Jesus just presses into the congregation there in Jerusalem and immediately he begins teaching and exposing and denouncing the evil hypocrisy of the powers that be and then they attack back and we notice the people are going to be split between them. We don't know the percentages. Some people sided with Jesus; some people sided with the religious authorities in Jerusalem. But the split is on.

That leads us to a good practical application for church life today, what to think of a church split. Well, we're taught, I think, by this that there are evil church splits and then there are good or righteous church splits. I think it would be a little bit better to say congregational splits. But anyway, an evil church split often is when two carnal, unspiritual groups and unscriptural groups fight over power and control issues in the church. I don't know, you know, I don't keep up with what's going on in the denomination at large very much anymore. I have all I can do to take care of our missions work and our plants and our partners. As a matter of fact, I don't take good care of them, but I do my best. But it was very common years ago to begin to hear about these church wars in Baptist and evangelical life. Do you know what the church war was over? The style of worship. The style of worship. Some would say, "We need to do what we've always done. We'll get out the old hymnals. We're going to sing three hymns. We're going to take up the offering at a certain place. We're changing nothing." Then a new crowd came along and said, "Wait a minute, what you're doing is old and cold and dead. We need to liven this thing up. Bring in some contemporary music and some upbeat stuff and lift the spirits of this place and make this thing right." They had wars and do you know what the result of the war was in many churches? They just split. They have a traditional service and a

contemporary service. And far too often the reality was this: the old traditional crowd had made an idol out of the tradition. The new contemporary crowd made an idol out of a contemporary style and neither one of them were on a righteous or scriptural footing. It was one idolatrous carnal group fighting another idolatrous carnal group.

Folks, the goal is not contemporary and the goal is not traditional, the goal is loving God and God's truth from the heart. You mean to tell me the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation and the Gospel can't change a people's hearts enough so that we can get over our silly style preference and just worship God together as one? Are you kidding me? I believe when you divide a church over something as shallow as style of worship, you're basically telling the world, "Our Gospel is impotent. It can't even change us enough to love each other enough to get over our personal preferences." "Well, pastor, what kind of style are we going to have?" The kind that I tell Tom to have. I just said that tongue-in-cheek to make sure you're listening this morning. I'll tell you what we're going to have, we're going to have truth and just like we sang today, if it's a twelfth century hymn and it's true, we'll sing it. And if it's a brand new hymn or chorus that is biblically true, we may sing it. We're not going to fight over that stuff and we don't do that here. You're just far beyond that nonsense, but I would say that's a bad or an evil church split when it's really just two idolatrous groups fighting over something that doesn't really matter.

But then there's a righteous or good church split and that's when a group seeks to expose and remove the obvious unbiblical compromise in a congregation and then they are opposed by those who love the status quo and that's exactly what Jesus does. He comes in with the truth, those who had gone comfortable in their traditions and in their routine were deeply and radically offended and you've got a split on your hands. Do you know what we celebrated Saturday? Was Saturday the 31st? Am I right? It wasn't Halloween. The 31st is Reformation Day because in 1517, October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, a Catholic monk who had been studying his Bible, wrote out 95 unbiblical things about Roman Catholicism. He wrote it out and nailed it on the church door in Wittenberg and the Reformation was on. Now, it was called a reformation because Martin Luther wasn't planning on leaving the Roman Catholic church, he just wanted to get them back to the Bible and he had discovered studying the word of God that justification was not in paying indulgences and doing the works and the rituals of Catholic tradition, that salvation was by grace through faith in Christ alone.

But the church would have none of it so you had a split. As a matter of fact, they brought Martin Luther, I think it was the Diet of Worms, it was a church confrontation for his heresy, and they confronted him to recant and Luther said, "Unless I'm convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by clear reason for I do not trust in either the Pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves, I am bound by the Scriptures. I have quoted them and my conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. God help me. Amen." You've got to understand something, they had the power of life or death in their hands, but Martin Luther boldly, based on reforming the church back to truth, took his stand and the split occurred. You have Protestantism on one side and Roman Catholicism on the other and all the Protestant

denominations came from that stance by Martin Luther, and many others who stood as generations went on.

So those are good splits and the author and the leader and the premier example of a good or righteous split is none other than Jesus Christ himself. I mean, throughout his earthly ministry, he entered city after city, town after town, village after village, and very often he would go to their synagogues and teach the truth thus exposing and condemning the compromise and error that had lain undisturbed for so long and immediately when Christ entered and began teaching, now listen, a verdict was rendered. A verdict came forth: either Christ is right and our tradition is wrong and our way is wrong or we are right and Christ is wrong. You had to decide. There was no neutral ground. And he did this throughout his earthly ministry. They could either submit to the truth or resist it. Jesus was, listen to me, Jesus was and Jesus is the greatest divider of all time. Now, God forbid someone get in a fleshly hypocritical mode and begin to cause troubles in a church or in a congregation claiming to be doing the work of Christ when he's really just about himself. But those who are humbly wrought upon by the Spirit of God, held captive by the truths of God's word, and strive to bring true biblical reforms to the church will cause splits, but in the end they're not causing them, God is and God's truth is.

So in this verse, verse 19, we see the split. Verse 19 talks about the scribes and Pharisees and whoever rallied around them is on one side and then many of the people who are beginning to warm to Jesus' teaching and accept Jesus' teaching, they were on the other side. So that's where we are. Now, these religious authorities who hated Christ and wanted to destroy him had a big problem, that was he had too many people on his side. There were enough people standing with Jesus they knew they couldn't get away from doing anything obvious so they tried their insidious plot. II. Notice their insidious plot and I want to bring out a divine twist. Insidious in the sense that they are now going to come at Jesus with something that looks so good and so right, like they have the best motives, when really all they care about is destroying him. They're not burdened about the truth. They're not burdened about the glory of God. Look, if they were burdened about the truth and the glory of God, they would be bowing at his feet and worshiping him, not trying to destroy him.

So notice this insidious plot and the divine twist. Verse 20 says, "So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous," what a phrase, "that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor." So these religious authorities knew they had been publicly exposed. Their credibility was on the line so they sent some others that the people didn't really know their real motives and they sent these guys, the Bible calls them "spies." So these religious authorities in this covert action to attack Jesus sink to another low level. One commentator writer said, "Through his entire life, with malice they haunted him." Through his entire life, with malice they haunted him. They kept after Jesus, trying to ruin him.

Verse 20 says they sent the spies that they might "catch Him in some statement." So everything about what these people are doing is to entangle Jesus, find some false

grounds that the people would think is true that they might expose Jesus and have Jesus condemned before the people. Now, here's the divine twist: while everything they are doing is to destroy Jesus, everything Jesus is doing is that they might be saved. All that they are about is his ruin, everything he is doing that he might bring them to righteousness.

You know, there is an application for us here and having a new membership class just starting and talking to some of the people, knowing some of the people, I know this to be true, it's just continually true and what is that? That is that a good majority of people when they first sit under sound doctrine, at first they are troubled by it. At first they don't like it. At the first every often, they are angry about it. But then the Spirit of God works on their hearts and they keep coming back and they soon love and embrace the truth with great joy and this is the common course in Christian conversion. This is not some unusual path. As a matter of fact, I would say it's almost impossible for a carnal or lost man to hear the truth of God's word for the first time and embrace it. Usually there is resistance. There is a troubling. There is, "I don't know about this. I don't think I like this." Well, I don't like it either but it's still true. Well, I mean, I didn't like it when I first heard it. I love it now.

Peter is a good example of this in Matthew 16:21-22. We look at this verse from time to time, especially when we do our purpose statement here, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day." So Jesus gives them the truth, "I'm going to Jerusalem to die." They thought he was going to Jerusalem to be enthroned and build a kingdom and bring them deliverance and blessings. They were not ready to hear the truth. They thought, "No, no, no, you're not going to go die. We've given up everything to follow you. You are not going to go die."

The next verse, verse 22, "Peter took Him aside." Peter said, "I think I can straighten Jesus out." "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.'" So as Peter learned the truth, what was his first response? "I don't like it. I resist it. I reject it." But lo and behold, you go to Acts 2 and this very same Peter who rejected it, who was troubled by it, who resisted it even to the point of rebuking God incarnate personally, he is preaching the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus with all boldness, joy and authority. You see, it just took some time. It took some time. Now, listen, that's why Romans 10 says, "Faith comes by hearing," present tense verb, "hearing the truth." Hearing the truth. Hearing the truth. And it begins to knock down all of those caricatures, all of those barriers we put up until our hearts gladly embrace. That's why we must raise our children under sound preaching and sound doctrine so the Gospel will penetrate that heart. It may take time. It may take years. It may take decades, but that's what God uses.

Even in Jesus' day, the truth that Jesus was and the truth that Jesus preached, angered so many but many of those, listen, many of those who initially resisted and became angry later became true disciples. That's the divine twist on this thing. He is exposing them. He is rebuking them. He is shaming them, but all to the end that he might save some of them.

Look at Acts 6:7, it will be on your screen. "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem," look at that, "and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." Surely a good number of those very priests just a few days earlier were championing the cause with the religious authorities to destroy Jesus Christ and now they're coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Oh, the love of Jesus. Oh, the grace of Jesus. Oh, the kindness and long suffering and goodness of Jesus. While his enemies unrelentingly, with guile and malice, insolent viciousness worked to destroy him, the entire time, he is working to deliver them. Only Jesus is like that.

So they had an insidious plot but God had a divine twist to everything they were doing. So they send these spies, these spies are going to come to Jesus and try to trick Jesus, try to catch him in something that would incriminate him in front of the people, and they use that phrase there in verse 20. These spies came to Jesus, look at it there in the New American Standard, it says, they "pretended to be righteous." Literally it means "they played the hypocrite." Now, child of God, church member, you dads, listen to your pastors, you granddads, you're the spiritual patriarch of your clan so be wise, be discerning: the servants of Satan often put on their Sunday best and play the Christian before men. Beware of those who can use the Bible well. "Pastor, how do we know?" I think there's one real clarion clear principle that exposes; sometimes it just points out immaturity and a person just needs to grow, but often it's exposing that their hearts aren't right. What is that? Humility and submission in the local church. Humility and submission in the local church.

As we were dealing with some people recently, 2 or 3 men have come to the elders saying they believe God's called them into the ministry and I was so blessed, no matter what their age or their place in life or in culture or society, they made it emphatically clear, "I will honor the wishes of my church and church elders. I know I cannot do God's will out from under a humble yieldedness to God's church." That just shows, "I'm in this for God. I'm not in this to do my thing and want you to bless it. I want to be part of God's thing in God's timing and do it God's way." That's the way I started my ministry and I'm so grateful because I was a very proud and arrogant young man. So grateful for Christian preachers and teachers who just bore into me the need to be humble before God ordained authority and I can tell you without question or doubt whatever else I got wrong, I got that right in God's grace. And I would go to my pastor and yield to him on everything I did or did not do. That's one way to know if someone is genuine. Now, again, it may just be showing that someone is not mature and they need to learn that principle, but very often they don't yield because they don't want to do things God's way for God's glory.

So here come these wolves in sheep's clothing. They are pretending to be godly and righteous and concerned for the truth in Israel, but these wolves in sheep's clothing could not deceive the Shepherd. Let's notice some of the particulars of their plot beginning in verse 21. In verse 21, these spies come up, verse 21 saying, "They questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth.'" Bunch of liars. Boldface, scheming, deceiving liars. That's all they are. They don't believe any of that. What this is is Psalm 55:21. Look

at Psalm 55:21, "His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords." That's what's going on here. Flattering, sweet, accommodating, commendable speech. That's why it's so insidious. It looks so good, but they're up to evil. They even call him teacher. Listen, you always be suspect when worldlings show you as a Christian honor. Very often they're up to something because if they don't love your Lord, they don't honor you.

They said, "We know you teach the way of God in truth." This is just a feigned respect and a false submission. They're trying to entrap Christ with flattery. They have honey on their lips but a sword is in their heart. This flattery, this insincere praise, is an attempt to throw Jesus off guard. Everything they are about, every bit of it, is premeditated evil.

Now, there is a lesson for us here, I think, as these guys so to the bone marrow are working to destroy and undermine Christ, we should be radically the opposite. Instead of trying to undermine Christ and diminish his doctrine, we should be faithful to receive the doctrine of truth. We should be faithful to follow his doctrine and we should be faithful to spread his doctrine. That's what we have tried to do here. Failingly, yes, and in weakness at times, yes, and having to repent sometimes, surely that's true, but we have tried to faithfully proclaim the doctrine of truth. That's why we started a television ministry years ago and today God has...we have moved it over to the internet, but God has greatly blessed that and there are many pastors who tell us quite regularly that, "Listening to your broadcast keeps me going because it's so hard and the opposition is so unrelenting." We should be faithful to try to spread those doctrines.

Verse 22, they set their trap here. They say in verse 22, "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" Now, they think they've got him here because either way he goes, if he says, "No, it's unlawful," then Rome is against him. If he says, "Well, no, it's lawful," then the Jews who hated their slavery to Rome and hated having to pay taxes to Caesar and to the Roman government, they even thought it was a sin to do so. You know it is interesting though, though these religious authorities would say it's a sin to pay taxes to Caesar, at the same time they gladly received tithes and offerings in Caesar's money. But they had a problem with that.

As a side note here to accommodate, if you will, or to show the strength of Christ's argument like he doesn't need any, but I'm saying that the continual teaching of the church has always been to honor those in authority in government. Romans 13:1, "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God." Now, what we have here in these Jews and, again, these type souls exist in every culture in every age, those who resist the rule of governing authority very often also resist the rule of God's authority in their lives. They just don't want to submit to anybody. I was talking earlier in my pastorate to an older pastor about a woman and some women in the church who were causing trouble and that older pastor said, "Brother Jeff, those ladies don't submit to their husbands and they're sure not going to submit to their pastors." They are not going to submit to anybody. That's called the Jezebel spirit. They will use their husband and mimic in honoring their husband to use their husband as their spokesman, their puppet,

but they're not submitting. That's the way it is here. These guys didn't like submitting to Rome saying, "Oh, it's unrighteous to submit to Rome and pay taxes," but at the same time, they don't submit to God either. They were just about themselves.

Verse 23, "He detected their trickery." Jesus did two things here: he saw through their question and he saw through their heart. He knew what was going on.

Now, verse 24, "'Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?' They said, 'Caesar's.'" Now the Greek here is real emphatic. It literally says, Jesus took the coin, held it up and said, "That inscription, whose is it? Who is on that coin?" Well, Caesar.

Look at verse 25, "And He said to them, 'Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'" Here is Jesus' point: Caesar's coins are stamped with the image of Caesar. Your soul is stamped with the image of God. Let Caesar have his money, but make sure God has your heart. That's Jesus' whole point. No matter what Caesar requires of you in taxation, he cannot take what is ultimately important and what's the most valuable, your soul and your heart, if you have given it to God. Give Caesar your money, but give God your heart.

Mark 12:30 says, we are to "love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind, all of our strength." You can honor even a wicked and vile government and yet in doing so honor God. Rome, by requiring taxes can never, ever keep you from rendering to God all that he desires. True religion and true Christianity, listen to me, never sees a problem between temporal governing rulers and divine rulership. There is a balance here now. There always is. If and when a government tells us specifically we must violate the clear teachings of Scripture, then we must respectfully disobey that governing order or law. So there is a balance. This is what Daniel did. When the king said, "Daniel, you've got to bow to the image I have placed up. You've got to worship this golden image," and Daniel wouldn't stop praying to his God. It was Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that God said, "Bow to the image," and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said, "We cannot bow and worship that image." Now, I think the key here is respectful and honorably appealing. You don't go in there and shake a Bible in their face and flaunt your righteousness. You've got to recognize all authorities are placed by God. Amen? So you appeal with respect and humility but you do not budge on clear biblical convictions. The apostles would not stop preaching the Gospel when ordered by the governing authorities. Acts 4:19, "But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge.'" "We'll honor everything you want but we can't change this conviction to preach the Gospel. And Jesus would not stop claiming to be the true, one promised Messiah, though the governing authorities said, "You've got to stop teaching and preaching this."

So there is a balance. The point is, we are to give everyone his due. We serve God by serving Caesar in the sense that we serve Caesar for God's sake and for God's glory. It should be known in the Shoals area that the members of Grace Life Church show the most honor, show the most respect to policeman, to city councilman, to mayors, to the

chief of police or whoever God may have as the governing authorities so that they will know if the day comes when they say, "You must stop preaching so and so, it's a sin. You must stop preaching this Gospel, it's disrupting our secular, progressive philosophy," then we will say, "We will honor you and respect you in humble submission in every way we can but we cannot change on this point."

Well, Christ the supreme Victor. Notice what happens in verse 26. The victory is won again by Jesus Christ. "And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people." They wanted him to be exposed in front of the people as being out of touch with their needs or with what they would desire. "And being amazed at His answer, they became silent." They thought this trap question would divide the people against Jesus, but in the end, they leave with both their hands and their tongues tied. Just a point of application here: have you found that if God owns your heart, you won't have a whole lot of trouble with your tongue?

Now, another thing that I'd like to point out here for application, it's real important to know that Jesus Christ nor the apostles who wrote the following books of the New Testament, championed a political change cause. They did not see the Christian movement as working through the government. I certainly am skeptical of the sincerity of the liberals who believe that we can legislate everything to make everything good and wonderful for everybody, but I'm equally skeptical for those professing Christians who get out of balance and believe the majority of their energies must be through the political cause to cure the evils of society. Christ didn't do it that way and the apostles did not, and the Scriptures even teach against that. At least they did not try to build God's kingdom by force of law but through a true Gospel and true churches, we can see people changed by the power of God and a changed people will change society and a changed society will be a changed government. If you look at American history, you will find that there was just a heavy dose of salt and light from persecuted reformers who fled Europe to be free to study and preach and teach and follow the Scriptures as they were written and I believe that is the reason why we have had the blessing and the success and the prosperity we have known in this country, because we had godly hearts influencing enough so that the government became the kind of government that would give us the kind of sanity and barriers and blessing to be a blessed people.

But Christ in every way is a supreme Victor. I think one thing we can draw from this is that no matter where you are, young people in school, you stand for Christ. You be true to your convictions and you get ridiculed. You get laughed at. You get left out. You just remember Christ is the Victor. In the office place, in the factory, wherever it may be, they are going to come after you from time to time. Yeah, it's very unlikely but it's possible they may even ridicule you for sitting under my preaching. Being a member of Grace Life or 1,001 other things. You just remember Christ is the Victor. As he always brought the victory, he will bring the victory for you. Give it some time. Keep your spirit right. Keep your heart humble and watch what God does.

But remember that he does not achieve the victory as we would think. Again, as we're going to follow through Luke, I'm going to jump ahead to make this concluding point: we

will see that finally Christ's enemies will succeed. Well, so they think. They indeed are going to agitate the Roman authorities until Rome finally agrees to crucify Jesus, yet in this defeat, he wins, for there on the cross Jesus will purchase his bride, his people, and in his death he righteously redeems his children and secures his kingdom, a kingdom that will endure for eternity, and in love and grace beyond the mind and comprehension of man, his enemies will also win, for in grace, his death can even provide for their forgiveness. When they finally succeed in crucifying Jesus, they actually lose. He actually wins, but in losing, they actually win, for in his death, he is sufficient to even forgive them.

Acts 2:23-24, Peter is preaching and he says, "This man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you," you Jews, you Jewish authorities, "you nailed to a cross by the hand of godless men," that's Rome, "and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." In other words, you killed him, but in back of it all, God was doing something. Acts 2:37-39, "Now when they," that's the Jews including some of the religious authority, "heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Now, notice verse 39, "'For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off,'" that's us, the Gentiles, "'as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.'" So here's what he's saying, "All the time you were actually deliberately hands on involved in destroying Jesus, he was actively working to deliver you." He accomplished the victory but not the way you would've thought.

Again, Acts 6:7, "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests," that's in there for a reason. Some of these guys helped destroy him, so they thought, "many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." Jesus conquers his enemies by redeeming them in love. Wow, what a Christ. What a Christ. What a Savior. What a friend. What grace. What goodness. My, my, my, treasure him more. Love him more. Joy in him more. Wonder over him more. Be in awe of him more. What a Savior.

Let's stand in prayer.