

Acts Part 14 – Cut to the Heart

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, December 2, 2015

Acts 5:26-33¹

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.
27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,
28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.
29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.
30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.
31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.
33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

Last week we looked at verses 17-26 which dealt with. The religious leaders arresting the Apostles, putting them in prison and then an angel of the Lord releases them and they go back to preaching in the Temple again. We focused on what the angel instructed them to teach and that was "the wonderful words of this life," which we saw was the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We saw the religious leaders went once again to the Temple and took the men without violence so they could question them again about what they were doing.

Tonight, Lord willing, we will look at verses 26-33 and see what happens during the questioning by the council and what results of it.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

We covered verse 26 last time and discussed the reason they took them without violence is because this case had garnered much attention and the Apostles were very popular. If they tried to arrest them the people may have rose up and stoned them to death. So they have to tread very carefully this time.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

So they bring the Apostles before the Sanhedrin court again to be questioned about their preaching. The High Priest reminds them that they had before commanded them not to teach in the name of Jesus yet here they are still doing it.

I don't know why they are so surprised that they continued preaching, I mean, after all, didn't they tell them the last time that they wouldn't stop? Let's revisit that from the previous chapter for a second:

Acts 4:15-21: 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

I don't know about you but it sounds to me like Peter and John had no intentions of stopping preaching about Jesus and flat out told them so. When someone tells me they are going to do something after being told not to, I take them at their word. Apparently these religious leaders thought they had enough power and influence that their threats would keep them from preaching. The problem is they have never dealt with men whose lives have been changed by the Lord Jesus. Their threats may have worked on the average Jew but not these Christians.

But, we see the real reason they don't want them preaching. Look at it in the last part of verse 28: **and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.** I find it odd that when Jesus was alive and being crucified that these religious leaders had no problem with His blood being upon them. In fact they wanted it and welcomed it to be upon them.

Look at it with me in **Matthew 27:20-26: 20** But **the chief priests and elders** persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. **25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.** 26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

It was the chief priests and elders that persuaded the multitude to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus. They had absolutely no problem with his blood being upon them back then, but now things have changed. Now they are dealing with the power of a resurrected Christ. Now the multitudes are listening to Jesus' Apostles and not the religious leaders. Now they are running scared.

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Peter tells them pretty much the same thing he told them the first time in Acts 4:19. They are more interested in doing what is right in the eyes of God than in the eyes of man.

¹ All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version

We need more preachers like Peter today. Men that are not influenced by what other men think or say but are influenced by being obedient to the Holy Spirit and to the Word of God. I thank the Lord that He has allowed me to pastor a Church where I have the liberty to preach God's Word without being afraid of what someone thinks.

I had a preacher tell me one time that he pastored a Church where the members didn't believe in eternal security. I asked him how that worked out and he said, "I just don't ever preach about it." My friend first of all I wouldn't accept a call to pastor at a Church that didn't believe all of the Bible and second of all I wouldn't pastor a Church where I didn't have the liberty to preach the Truths from the Bible.

Some men are so afraid of offending folks that sin that they hop, skip, and jump all around any sin in the Bible and just end up preaching marshmallows and fluffy bunnies. Some preachers won't preach against sodomy because they have allowed gays to join the Church or somebodies son or daughter is gay and they don't want to offend them. Some preachers won't preach against drinking because they know they have church members that social drink. Some preachers won't preach on tithing because they know there are those in the church that don't believe in it.

Let me just say this; if preaching the Truth from God's Word offends you then you needed to be offended. I hope I do touch on something that offends you enough to make you examine your heart and get right with God.

Then Peter really lets them have it. Most men would have been too scared to talk to this council the way he did but just like Peter said, he ought to obey God rather than men. Look what he says: **30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.** Notice that Peter makes the statement "the God of OUR fathers." Meaning the same God that the men on this council serve and worship. This isn't some foreign God or one of the gods of Rome but the very God whom these men state they work for.

He tells them that their God raised up this Jesus that they have been preaching about and that these men are responsible for putting him to death. In other words Peter is charging this religious council of 1st degree murder. It was pre-meditated murder.

Then he goes on to say: **31Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

Not only did they murder Jesus but they murdered the Saviour of Israel, the blessed promised Messiah that was promised by God to be sent to bring salvation and forgiveness to His people. By giving him the title of Prince is clearly indicated that he was the Messiah. The Jews had always referred to the Messiah as a Prince.

The Prophet Isaiah said: **Isaiah 9:6:** For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, **The Prince** of Peace.

The Prophet Daniel said: **Daniel 9:25:** Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

So, for Peter to use that title is very significant and has a major impact on these religious leaders as we will see in verse 33.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Talk about stirring up trouble. Peter not only accused them of murdering Jesus, the Prince, the Messiah, but he tells them that they are operating under the influence of the Holy Ghost. The Saducees certainly flipped out over that statement but the important thing to notice here is the fact that the Holy Ghost is the One who is working through these men. I don't think they would be able to stand like this otherwise. Jesus had warned them when he was still living among them that these things would happen. Look at it in **Matthew 10:16-20:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.** 17 **But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;** 18 **And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.** 19 **But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.** 20 **For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.**

Looks to me like Jesus had already looked ahead in time and knew these men would be standing before a religious council and he knew that they would need the power of the Holy Ghost to be able to endure it.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

Now, that ugly side pops up again in the religious council. Just like we have seen throughout the Bible when religious people get under conviction instead of repenting of their sins they strike out in anger. They become violent. What these men should have done is what the people did in Acts chapter 2 when they were confronted with the same exact charges. Look at the difference: Peter is preaching on the Day of Pentecost and he is preaching about Jesus and he says this to them: **Acts 2:22-23: 22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:**

He continued preaching and then down in verse 37 it says: **Acts 2:37-41: 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.** 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

But this religious council doesn't repent and get saved, instead they rebel and become violent and want to commit even more murder and sin.