

Suffering Gladly in Spreading the True Narrative
Acts 5; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 3-13-2022

Introduction: 2+2= 5

If there's anything we should conclude from reading the Bible or reading the news or evaluating our own lives, it is this: *Truth matters*. If truth matters, then lies and false narratives also matter. – John 8:31-32; Matthew 24:11; Colossians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Matthew 7:12-15; 1 Timothy 3:1; Acts 26:25

"If the Führer wants it, two and two makes five!" – Hermann Goring

"Freedom is the freedom to say '2+2 = 4'." – Winston in 1984

Miraculous Help in Spreading the Gospel Truth (17-25)

- An angel of the Lord (19) = angels are ministers of God to His people and are sent to serve their good
- The whole message of this life (20) = the truth about life as revealed in the gospel: the truth about God and man and Jesus and the response of faith and love

We need great help in spreading the gospel. – Acts 4:29-31

Resolve in Spreading the Gospel Truth (26-32)

- We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name (28) = attempt of those in authority to silence narratives that oppose their narrative
- We must obey God rather than men (29) = Peter and the Apostles were resolved to submit to God above any human authority in doing what is right
- God raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross (30) = you killed Jesus and God gave him life, you put him under the worst curse and God placed Him in the position of greatest blessing
- A Prince and a Savior (31) = the Author or Lord of all and the only One who can save us from our sins
- To grant repentance and forgiveness (31) = repentance is a gift and forgiveness is a gift and they both go together
- We are witnesses and so is the Holy Spirit (32) = the Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth in Jesus through the testimony of believers

We need great resolve in spreading the gospel. – Daniel 3:16-18

Conviction in Spreading the Gospel Truth (33-39)

- Cut to the quick and intended to kill them (33) = all conviction does not result in repentance; it may simply result in greater hatred and hardness of heart

- Theudas rose up and was killed and all were dispersed, Judas of Galilee rose up and perished and all were scattered (36, 37) = experience teaches that movements without any divine sanction will not last
- If it is of men, it will be overthrown, if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them (39) = time will tell whether this movement is of God or not
- Found fighting against God (39) = we must be careful or we will become the fool who fights against infinite Power

We need great conviction in spreading the gospel. – Job 42:1-3

Suffering Gladly in Spreading the Gospel Truth (40-42)

- They flogged them, ordered them and released them (40) = they listened to Gamaliel and did not kill them but still vented their anger on them and demanded that they obey them with the implication that they would not be so kind in the future
- Rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name (41) = they found joy in the grace to suffer for Christ rather than deny Him or run away
- Kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (42) = they continued to announce the good news and to explain how it should impact people's lives

We need great rejoicing in spreading the gospel. – Nehemiah 8:10

Conclusion: *Tyranny and Truth*

What did the believers in the 1st century church need to know?

- The truth is what is needed in the face of falsehood.
- God has confirmed the gospel as truth in many miraculous ways.
- Opposition to the truth should be expected.
- Others have suffered for the truth by God's grace.
- It is an honor to suffer for the truth for Jesus' sake.
- It is necessary to suffer for the truth in order to love others, even our enemies.
- The endurance of the Church in spite of violent and persistent opposition is a testimony to the truthfulness of the message it proclaims.

The book of Acts illustrates the reality that truth is always the target and victim of tyranny (the rule of man over man for selfish purposes; the rule of Satan over man for hellish purposes).

- Through our lips and our lives, we are bearing witness to a narrative regarding life.
- The question is: 'Are we spreading a false narrative and misinformation about life or are we spreading a true narrative and the truth about life?'
- It is one or the other. Truth or lie. Fact ($2+2 = 4$) or fiction ($2+2 = 5$).
- Standing for the truth is a life and death proposition.

We do need to think. And believe. And obey. *Truth matters!*