

Acts 5:12-42

“All The Words Of This Life”

Go ahead and place your finger in Acts ch 5 but then do me a favor and find your way to Lev Ch 10 and Joshua ch 7.

As we study the scriptures it seems to surface that whenever God is establishing a new order He always sanctions it with a warning regarding holiness, that if we're to *enjoy* His *presence*, and reap the *advantages* of His *power*, that there 1st must be *purity* in our lives.

You're familiar with the flow of Lev ch 9-10, the priestly order is just being established, Aaron followed through on all the sacrifices that were required of him. He then lifts up his hand toward the people and blesses them, he and Moses go into the tabernacle of meeting, come back out and bless the people again and then the glory of the Lord appears before the people. The very substance, and reality of God's presence was seen visually before them all. Then fire came out from before the Lord and ignited the sacrifice upon the altar and consumed the burnt offering. And the people were absolutely elated, and vehemently excited. Just like you or I would be if we were to see fire come out from before the Lord and ignite the sacrifice so powerfully/profoundly. Why? Because this was God's way of basically authenticating, or substantiating the fact that He was in approval of all that they had done up to this point! And there's no reason why He shouldn't be, because they were doing things the way that He had commanded, and when you subject and submit yourself to the word of God, He's going to reveal Himself to you in ways that will blow your mind. And that was exactly what was happening here, a national “mind blowing” kind of a day because the nation as a whole was in harmony with what God was doing. and Vs 24 of Ch 9 tells us that when the people saw it, they *shouted* and fell on their faces. A 2-fold worship experience, they shouted with joy, being topped out that God was dwelling in *their* midst, receiving *their* worship. But then they fell on their faces being overwhelmed with the reality of the presence and glory of God. I mean this is an incredible time of revival, God is moving, hearts are being stirred, lives are being changed, Nadab and Abihu, (Aaron's sons) say, “Hey, sign us up for the ministry,” notice vs 1.

Vs1-2

Talk about being “burned out” in the ministry. But what's going on here? They just wanted to be apart of the revival seemingly. It seemed to be the right thing to do, the *hot* place to be, just serving the Lord, when all of the sudden fire came out from the Lord and destroyed them. Notice vs 3

Vs3

Believe me when I tell you there's a lot to this whole scene here which we don't have the time to explore, but the point in vs 3 is that Nadab and Abihu were not regarding the *holiness* of the Lord as evidenced in the way they *approached* the Lord, things weren't right. Things weren't right *ceremonially*, things weren't right in their lives personally/morally. and If we're to enjoy God's presence, benefit from God's power, we must be pure. (Look at Joshua Ch 7).

What's the new order? After 40 yrs of wilderness wanderings, the people of Israel have entered the Promised Land, they've crossed the Jordan, they've been purified at Gilgal (via circumcision) and now they're enjoying the presence and the power of God bringing them victory. They've defeated Jericho, and now they're at Ai, you know the deal. Ai wasn't too big, so the boys said to Joshua, don't weary the men just send a few to wipe it out. Long story short, the people of Ai cleaned their clocks, Joshua falls on his face before the Lord and says, "God what's the deal." (Look at vs 10)

Vs10-12

You see there was a breach in purity; therefore there was a breach in power. They weren't to take anything for themselves from the victory at Jericho and the silver and gold was to be given to the Lord out of the city, notice the last minute instructions Joshua reminded them of before they entered the city back in ch 6 vs18-19 (read). Someone violated the order, ch 7 tells us it was a man by the name of Achan, what were they to do? God told them to purge the impurity from their midst, they were to stone Achan and his family, burn all that he had with fire and God would be with them again, and that's what they did (look at vs 1 of ch 8).

They're no longer impure, so now they're empowered by God once again, God was sending the message out, "I must be regarded as Holy among My people, and My power demands a pure life."

The same thing happened in the establishing of the church (which connects us to the context of Acts ch 5) Ananias and Sapphira playing the part of the hypocrite. Putting up a pretense of giving all that they had, so that they might be seen as super spiritual, when in reality they were keeping back part of their resources for their own self serving agenda. As if God didn't know what was going on, God knows what's going on, and He knows what's going on in my life, and He knows what's going on in yours. Jesus said, "*Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.*" Luke 12:1-3 Man may be looking at the outward appearance, but God is looking at your heart. Well, you remember what happened, God purged the leaven, both Ananias and Sapphira upon being exposed fell down dead divinely judged by God right there at Peter's feet; and vs 11 tells us that (read).

There's something about a healthy fear of God that promotes purity, it has a cleansing affect upon our lives, notice Ps 19:9, "*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;*" "*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil;Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*" Prov 8:13 "*The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.*" Prov 14:27 and Again, "*In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.*" Prov 16:6 1 more Prov 19:23 "*The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.*" Prov 16:6 The fear of the Lord is clean, it promotes purity, and to the pure who fear God, God will invest His power, notice.

Vs12-16

Powerful things were happening, and there's a few things to notice here, 1st of all did you notice how news of that whole happening with Ananias and Sapphira put a sure stop to people seeking to put on a show of spirituality? In vs 13 "None of the rest dared join them" or another way to understand that is that people with out pure motives were held at bay. People didn't just join the church because it was the hot place to be, or just seemed to be the right thing to do; there was a sense of awe among the people. and That understanding of, if you're not serious a love relationship with Jesus, than it's best to just not even seek to be #'d among them because its obvious that God has a problem with pretense and demands purity in His people. But that didn't stop the radical explosive growth of the church; it just ensured the purity of the movement.

Believers were still being added to the Lord in multitudes, and we note the fact that they were added to *the Lord*. They weren't added to the 1st Christian Church of Jerusalem, or St. Peter's Cathedral, they were added to the Lord. You're either apart of the body of Christ, or you're not, I don't care if you meet with a Baptist denomination, the Christian church, Calvary Chapel or whatever, that's a secondary issue, the primary issue is whether or not you've been added to the Lord, because being added to the membership roster of a particular church doesn't mean anything.

That's in part why we don't have church membership here, you're either a member of the body of Christ or you're not. and I don't want to give anyone a false sense of security thinking that because they've "joined the church" that that somehow secures their salvation or makes them ok in the eyes of God. The way you're added to the Lord is by becoming a believer in the finished work of Jesus Christ it's not about what you *do*, it's about what He's *done* and having faith in Him, not your name on a piece of paper somewhere.

But we see in vs 15 and 16 where all these radical miracles were taking place, people being healed, delivered from demonic oppression and possession. I like the phrase, “they were *all* healed.” None of them were turned away because “*they didn’t have enough faith*” God was just doing the work. and This happening here of people wanting Peter’s shadow to fall on them is pretty interesting isn’t it? Was there power in Peter’s shadow? No, but apparently for some it acted as a point of contact for them to release their faith, sort of like that woman with the flow of blood who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment. The piece of material had no power in it, but she had the faith to know that if she could just touch even the hem of His garment she’d be healed. and When she broke through that crowd, fell at His feet and grabbed hold of His garment, her faith was released she was healed.

This is a similar situation, just like the laying on of hands, or the anointing with oil, there’s no power in olive oil, or the touch of someone’s hands. But God knows our make up, and how we’re sort of a “tangible” type people, so He has these things set in order to serve as a contact point for the release of our faith. “I just know that if even Peter’s shadow comes into contact with me that God will touch my life.” So when Peter would pass by, the moment his shadow overshadowed me, at that moment I believe God for the healing, He responds to my faith and touches my life. In reality it has nothing to do with the shadow of Peter, but it has everything to do with faith in the power of God. and At times God will use certain things to act as a catalyst if you will to strengthen the resolve of my faith, (the anointing oil, the laying on of hands, the hem of Jesus’ garment, in this case Peter’s shadow etc).

But the primary application I want you to see here is that people desired Peter’s influence in their lives, in the lives of their families, and of their friends. and I let this probe me for just a bit, now I’ll ask you, do people genuinely desire the influence that you are, or that you have, to overshadow their lives? Do you serve as an example that people can glean from? Or if they followed you as a pattern would they be persuaded in ways that were unwise. Do you speak into people’s lives in ways that are edifying, encouraging, loving and truthful? Or are you generally critical, and of no real benefit spiritually to the people around you? The bible says, “*There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.*” Prov 12:18 and Again, “*Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.*” Prov 16:24 The influence of Peter in these people’s lives was sweetness to their soul, and health to their bones. I pray that the same thing could be said of you, could be noted of me.

Vs17-18

The church was pure, moving in God’s power, increasing in popularity, which resulted in what? *Prominence, platform and position*? No, persecution, understand that a life that’s pure *before* God, and empowered by God, in no way guarantees general amnesty from persecution. Jesus said, “*Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*” John 15:20

Now you can't get any more pure, or any more of God's power at work in you than Jesus, yet He suffered persecution, and I might add you can't be any more persecuted than Him either. So we see both happening here, those who were keeping their word, and those who were persecuting them. and Here where it says they were filled with indignation, really the word there is "jealousy" or "envy," it points to that emotion that Cain was consumed by for Abel. Or Joseph's brother when all they could think about was getting rid of him by whatever means necessary.

The sin of envy is deadly, guard your heart well, the proverbs tell us, "A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones." Prov 14:30 Matt 27 tells us that Jesus was handed over to Pilate out of *envy*. Peter said, "*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*" 1 Peter 2:1-3 Notice how closely connected hypocrisy and envy are, they're right there together, the bible is clear that these things will destroy our lives. These Sadducees were infuriated at the growing popularity that these guys were gaining in the public eye. Especially since what they were bringing to the people was the reality of the resurrection, because the Sadducees didn't even believe in a resurrection, so rather than placing them in a position or platform of prominence, they place them in prison.

Vs19-20

The book of Heb tells us that angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation, and here we see a real working example of that. Did they immediately discern that he was an angel? I don't know, the bible says that at times some of us entertain angels unaware in that they may present themselves to you in the form of just a person that you don't know. Now you *can* know that they won't smell like alcohol, nor will you get a contact high from standing beside them, but what I want you to see here is why it is that these guys were set free.

Were they freed for their own personal comfort, or benefit? No, were they freed so that they might escape harms way, being told to take the 1st train out of Jerusalem? No, they were freed in order to speak to the people all the words of this life, that is, eternal life, resurrection life, this life that's ours in Christ. Teach them the principles and precepts of it, the practicalities of what Jesus has done for us, what it means to us, and the way that Christ is to be reflected in us. How that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, He took my place and died a substitutionary death in my stead, and that by faith in Him, you can receive the forgiveness of sin. How that once you've had a up close and personal encounter with Christ, your life will be changed forever.

Repentance will be the fruit of His forgiveness towards your life, you can't continue in the things that you were once apart of. Because you realize those are the things that put Jesus on the cross, and God forbid that I should grieve the Holy Spirit through the pleasure of sin in my life. God help us, how often we grieve the Holy Spirit because of the pursuit of the personal pleasure of a season of sin. When will we learn that sowing to the flesh brings on a harvest of corruption? Not only to our own lives, but it impacts the lives of everyone around us. But we get so self consumed that all we think about is what we want to do in that moment of time. God help us that we crucify the flesh, and walk in the Spirit. The bible is clear, "*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*" Rom 8:13 They were freed from prison to share all the words of everlasting life to the people.

Question, why has the Lord set you free from the bondage of the flesh and the prison of sin? Why has He set a captive like you free? For your own personal benefit? No, so that you might in turn take a stand and speak to the people that are with in *your* arena, all the words of *this life in Christ*.

Notice the phrase, "all the words" the whole counsel, because there is nothing lacking in the Word of God as it pertains to the needs and circumstances of your life. Peter wrote "*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*" 2 Peter 1:2-3 How is that we receive everything we need pertaining to life and godliness? Through the knowledge of Him.

How do you receive the knowledge of Him? Through the reading, meditating, and searching out of His Word. It's all here, God's Word has the power to transform your life spiritually, emotionally, mentally, whatever your need may be the Word of God addresses it and has a solution for it.

Vs21

See how the *assurance* that God was in control gave them the *ability* to be committed whole-heartedly to the task? When I'm not sure God is leading, and I lack that *realization*, it's conducive to *procrastination* in my life, or a delay in my response, or my moving forward in a certain situation. But that assurance of God's leading in my life fosters a swiftness or a diligence about my actions, "they entered the temple early in the morning." There was an immediacy with which they responded, because they were convinced that God was in control, so they were committed to the command to teach the people. You see, when you see that hand of God *on* a situation, and the Spirit of God going *before* a situation, it strengthens your resolve, gives you the fortitude you need to follow through, because I know God is *in* this and leading me *through* this.

Vs22-25

Remember the angel told them to “stand” in the temple and speak to the people. What are they doing? “Standing” in the temple, teaching the people, the point being they’re not in a frantic panic, their calm, relaxed, just doing what the Lord would have them to do and they’re not freaked out about what might happen.

Vs26

The fear of man, but no fear of God.

Vs27-28

2 Counts, disobeying their original command to quit teaching the people in the name of Jesus, and (as far as they were concerned) seeking to make them look responsible for the death of Jesus Christ They’re all, “You intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” I guess they forgot what they were saying a couple of months ago when Pilate was seeking to free Jesus and when they refused he said, “I’m innocent of this Man’s blood, you see to it!” Remember what they said? “*His blood be on us and on our children.*” Matt 27:25 I guess they forgot about that, but Peter wasn’t seeking to bring guilt upon them in that respect, but rather seeking to convey the message that forgiveness was available to them, as it is to all who will believe upon Jesus.

Vs29

Nothing has changed since ch 4, but we should note the fact that Peter was by no means a general insurrectionist, he himself said, “...*submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men -- as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*” 1 Peter 2:13-17 Anytime civil disobedience is carried out it needs to be done under the covering of 2 things. #1 Scriptural authority, the only time I’m to go against the grain of government is when the government is seeking to force me to go against the grain of God’s Word. #2 In Total Humility, Peter was humbly willing to suffer the consequences for his actions with out resistance, he didn’t try to stir the mob for his advantage or anything like that. and In every case in scripture you’ll find that those who said that they couldn’t *obey* civil law due to a scriptural violation, willingly received the penalty of *disobeying* that law with out hostility, bitterness or violence. Peter doesn’t seek to defend his actions he just shares the gospel again.

Vs30-32

The law said cursed be anyone who is hanged on a tree, and Jesus bore the full curse of the law, He was humbled more than any man, therefore (vs 31) He’s been exalted more highly than any man at the right hand of God, speaking of that place of power and authority. To be the Prince of Life and the Saviour of mankind, we do the sinning, Jesus does the saving, that’s just the way it is, there’s nothing we do to help the salvation process along.

Be it baptism, religious works, or anything else, Jesus *paid it all*, all to Him I owe. Peter says, “We’re witnesses to these things, and the Holy Spirit bears witness as well whom God gives to those who obey Him.”

Vs33

The gospel message will melt the heart of some, and harden the hearts of others, you’ve heard the phrase, “The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay.” What makes the difference? The environments the same, but the substance subjected to the environment might be different, so you get different results. Fire will burn wood, but it purifies gold, which are you? Does the gospel message just make you mad, or does it melt your heart? Does it upset you that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, or does it excite you that He loves you so much that He laid down His life for you, that you might have life in Him, that He became sin for you that you might become the righteousness of God in Him? The gospel message infuriated these guys; they were ready to kill them all right there.

Vs34-39

Now God used this advice to spare their lives, but it’s really not very good advice in that if they were really wanting to know if what they were saying was true, they’d have launched an investigation. Searched out the scriptures, seen if these things were able to be substantiated, and his basic platform had assumed that Jesus was just a zealous Jew in the class of common criminals. “He’s really no different than these other 2 guys, and now that He’s gone it’s just a matter of time before his followers disperse.” Troublemakers come and go (sort of a thing). and His premise is that if anything isn’t of God it’s destined to fail, but that’s not true either, just look around. Mark Twain said something to the effect of, “A lie runs around the world while truth is still putting on her shoes.” Success isn’t the test of truth *or* godliness, besides how long should they wait, if it was a success what should they do next, what would be the determining factor *of* its success, it seems logical, but really its faulty logic. But the council bought it so they’re not killed today.

Vs40-42

This was no slap on the wrist, we’re talking 39 stripes according to the measure of the law, the law allowed for 40, they’d temper it with mercy making it 39. and These guys just pressed on; persistency. Pressing on through persecution, teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. May God help us to be faithful to speak to the people *all the words of this life*. That even in the face of persecution, we would not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

This morning you've heard the words of this life in Christ. That Jesus died on the cross for you, three days later He came forth from that tomb never to die again, and that by believing in Him you can receive forgiveness of sin, everlasting, age abiding life. Jesus wants to live in you, but 1st He wants to purify you through the washing and cleansing of your heart by the power of His blood forgiving your sin. You can't clean up your own act, you'll slip into hypocritical mode real quick that way, just let Jesus have *His* way in your life. If you want to receive Jesus, you can be sure that Jesus wants to receive you. Give your heart, your life to Christ, ask Him to come in to your heart and forgive you of your sin, and He'll wash you white like snow.