

Thankful for the Commission

Acts 5: 40-42

This morning I want to continue the thought we began last week in regard to the blessings we have through a personal relationship with the Lord. As believers in Christ, pardoned from sin, placed within the body of Christ, and promised eternal life, there is much we should be thankful for. One such blessing is the gracious opportunity to serve at His leisure.

I fear too often, many view their service to Christ as a burden rather than the blessing it actually is. Of all the people in the world the Lord could have chosen to save and use for His glory, He included us in His plan. As the Lord prepared to ascend back to the Father, following His triumphant resurrection, He left detailed instruction for the church. **Matt.28:19-20 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.** This was not given as a mere suggestion – it was given as a command. Jesus gave the Great Commission to the church, fully expecting our obedience and participation. We are blessed to have received such a tremendous honor!

Our text deals with those who were faithful to the Great Commission. Their commitment should serve to challenge our faithfulness in serving the Lord. As we examine the **elements** involved, I want to consider: **Thankful for the Commission.**

I. The Opposition Encountered (40) – **And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.** Although these were committed to the Lord and excited to share the Gospel, not everyone shared their excitement. Our situation is much different, but we cannot expect everyone to appreciate or support our service to the Lord. In the midst of difficulty, we must continue! Notice:

A. The Atmosphere – We need to take a moment to consider the atmosphere in which Peter and the others found themselves. The Lord had been moving mightily through their ministry. Souls were being saved, lives were being transformed, and folks were being healed of physical ailments. Multitudes were gathering in Jerusalem to see the apostles, even from neighboring cities. There was no small stir happening in Jerusalem.

- Fearing they would lose their grip on power, the high priest and those who supported him apprehended the apostles and cast them in the common prison. These tried to silence the Gospel, but the Lord sent an angel to deliver the apostles from prison during the night, instructing them to

proclaim the Gospel at the Temple. Finding out these had escaped and were again preaching in the Temple, the council once again apprehended the apostles and brought them to answer for their actions. Clearly, the apostles served in a hostile environment, surrounded by those who were determined to prevent their preaching of the Gospel.

B. The Abuse (40) – After bringing the apostles back before the council, they were beaten before they were released. We do not have much detail regarding the extent of the abuse the apostles endured, but this does carry the idea of “*scourging*.” It is quite possible these men were beaten severely, simply for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

- Many around the world are forced to endure such treatment because of their commitment to sharing the Gospel. Most in America do not face physical abuse, but we are seeing opposition increase in our day. We might as well prepare to endure continued opposition as we serve the Lord and proclaim the Gospel.

C. The Admonition (40) – [they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go](#). The council forbade the apostles from preaching the name of Jesus any more among the people. They didn’t even want to hear His name mentioned in public. These were determined to silence the apostles and the Gospel message. Apparently, they weren’t listening to Peter a few moments before, [Acts 5:28-32](#). We will discover the apostles refused to remain quiet about Jesus.

- You will have to agree that the tolerance level for public proclamation of the Gospel is decreasing in America. Those who oppose the Gospel want us to be restrained from sharing our faith publicly. Many are being rebuked and even charged with violations of the law for sharing their faith in the public arena.

II. The Jubilation Expressed (41) – [And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name](#). I am certain the council did not expect this reaction from the apostles, but as they departed, they were joyful. Consider:

A. The Rejoicing (41) – This seems an unusual response to having endured being scourged for their faith. Instead of cowering in fear and refusing to speak, they openly rejoiced. Their love for the Lord and commitment to Him exceeded their fear of man.

- As I pondered their reaction, I felt conviction. We are blessed beyond measure, facing little persecution for our faith. We have the opportunity to gather here for worship without any public

hindrance, and yet many times we fail to rejoice. Our Lord has given us far more than we deserve. We have been redeemed from sin, delivered from eternal death, reconciled to God, and promised eternal life. What more do we need to promote an attitude of worship and rejoicing? Has the Lord not been good to us? Has He not blessed and met our needs? Are we not thankful for His gracious provision in our lives? Rejoicing should come natural for the believer!

B. The Recognition (41) – *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.* The text reveals the reason for their rejoicing – they were honored to be counted worthy for suffer shame for the great name of Jesus. They held a proper perspective. These men had witnessed the horrors of the cross. They knew first-hand what Christ had endured to purchase their redemption. They had encountered the risen, living Lord, having received the Great Commission from Him. They counted it all joy to suffer for the name of Christ. He was worthy of any sacrifice they were asked to make for Him!

- I am convinced that we cannot relate to such suffering. We may have to endure some mockery or ridicule, but we have not suffered physically for our faith. If that times comes, and it certainly could, we must possess the attitude of the apostles. I have read of the suffering Christ endured on my behalf. I know that He bore my sin and faced the righteous judgment of God in my place. He rose again for my justification. He endured the horrors of Calvary for me! The least I can do is be willing to endure adversity for His great name! He is worthy of any sacrifice we may have to make in this life to honor and glorify Him!

III. The Proclamation Expounded (42) – *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.* Here we discover the defiant response to those who forbade them to speak the name of Jesus. Consider:

A. Their Focus – *they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.* These had suffered great physical pain for preaching of Jesus. They had been humiliated and reprimanded publicly. However, upon their release, the message they preached did not change. They did not water-down the Gospel or preach socially acceptable topics. They continued to preach Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, and risen for the salvation of humanity!

- That is the focus of the Great Commission. We are commanded to preach the truth of the Gospel, making disciples who will also share this glorious truth! The church has not been left upon the earth to share what the world wants to hear. We have not been called to compromise the truth in order to gain the favor of society. We must preach Jesus, crucified, buried, and risen as the sole means of salvation!

B. Their Faithfulness (42) – We find they daily preached Jesus Christ. This was not a message that was reserved for Sunday or rehearsed on special occasions. They daily preached the Gospel to those they encountered. Sharing the Gospel had become a way of life for the apostles. It was continually on their mind and they were compelled to share the Gospel daily.

- Oh, how we need such faithfulness in our day! We cannot keep the Gospel locked away in the stain glassed prisons of pristine sanctuaries. We must be willing to engage those we meet in our day to day activities with the Gospel. The message of the Gospel and the desperate need of mankind should continually be upon our minds! We should never let a day pass that we don't share the Gospel in some way. I will admit I need to do much better, and I would think most of you would have to agree.

C. Their Fortitude (42) – **And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.** The apostles did not wait for the “*perfect opportunity*” to share the Gospel. They reached out to people wherever and whenever they encountered them. In fact, they were willing to return to the belly of the beast. They had been arrested and beaten for sharing the Gospel at the Temple, and yet they were committed to return there and preach again. They would not allow the threats and abuse of men hinder their commitment to the Gospel.

- Is that not a convicting thought? Many find it difficult to give the Lord a few hours a week in worship at His house. Few are committed to the Lord and proclaiming the Gospel as we should. We need the fortitude and faith of the apostles. We need unhindered boldness to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Everyone will not appreciate it, and some will even oppose our efforts. Regardless of what we face, we must remain committed to proclaiming the saving grace of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world.

Conclusion: I think you will agree that this has been a very challenging passage. I know it brought conviction to me as I prepared this message. I know that there is much room for improvement in my life. Are we truly thankful for the Great Commission, honored to have the privilege to share, or do we view it as a burden, something we had rather not do? Are we faithful in sharing our faith, seeking out those opportunities, or do we dismiss the leading of the Spirit when prompted to share?

Has the Lord spoken to you today? Do you need to come and confess your need while seeking boldness to share? Have you responded to the call for salvation, repenting of sin and believing in the Lord by faith? If there are needs, bring them to Jesus!