

Obtaining Strength to Stand

Acts 5: 17-32

There is no need for me to tell you that the Christian journey is often hard. I'm sure that you've found that to be true on numerous occasions. This is to be expected. We are in the world, but not of the world. The fact is we simply don't fit into the world's mold. We are like trying to force a square peg in a round hole. The world has no use for a child of God, one who truly desires to live for Him.

Jesus well understood the difficulties that we face because He endured the same trials, but in a much harsher way. **Jn.15:18 – If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.** The Christian is guilty by association; we are hated because of our relationship with Jesus. As long as we live in this sin cursed world, trouble will abound, but we can learn to overcome and be productive in the Lord's work.

We find in our text an account of some of the difficulty the apostles faced. Even in the midst of adversity they were triumphant in the Lord. We may not have the world's approval, but we can be an effective witness for Christ. Let's look at the great **truths** found here as we consider: **Obtaining Strength to Stand.**

I. The Sadducee's Resistance – The Sadducees were a devoutly religious sect, but they were strongly opposed to the gospel of Christ. They lived strict lives according to the law, but resisted the notion that Jesus was the Christ.

- Much of what we faced is rooted in religious practice. Men are by nature religious creatures. He will worship something, even if it's himself. Satan has sold the world a bill of goods on universal acceptance, just worship God in whatever fashion you see fit and in whatever image you believe Him to be. The world despises those who preach Jesus as the only way of salvation. If you have any doubt, He is the only way. He is the door by which men reach heaven. **Jn.14:6 – Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.** Let's take a moment and look at the scope of their resistance.

A. Their Indignation (17) – **Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,** The apostles were doing great miracles and wonders among the people in the name of Jesus, **Vv.12-16.** These men were upset that they were no longer in the "limelight." Their strangle hold of legalism was being loosened by the preaching of Christ.

- Clearly the apostles were operating under the power of God, not merely human ability. (Whatever we accomplish for the glory of God can only be done by and through His power.)
- The one thing that troubled the Sadducees more than anything was the message of Jesus' resurrection. They denied a bodily resurrection. That is the basis for our hope; had Jesus not risen, we would have no hope of life after death. This world doesn't like to be held accountable to God. They want to embrace a doctrine of good works and personal achievement to secure acceptance.
- We might as well accept the fact that the world will stand against the truth of the gospel! Many TV evangelists would be out of business if everyone believed the truth of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone! They want to keep folks bound to the legalism of works to secure salvation. Jesus is the way!

B. Their Suspicion (24) – [Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.](#) Here we see a sense of fear coming upon the Sadducees. The apostles had been miraculously released from the prison, with no clear explanation. They felt their grip of power was becoming weaker by the moment. They couldn't explain what had taken place and they were unsure of what the outcome would be.

- This world has a problem with genuine faith. They tend to reject things that can't be explained. They get uneasy when things happen that they have no control over. Satan doesn't like it either. He has power, but his power is limited.
- God will do as He pleases and this world can do nothing to stop Him. Think about how strange the gospel message is to an unbeliever. It has to be accepted by faith. I have seen the Lord's hand perform miracles in too many lives to doubt His almighty power. This world can't explain it so they choose to oppose it!

C. Their Rejection (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.](#) Once they have brought Peter and the others in again, they begin to rebuke them for their actions. "We told you not to preach in Jesus' name. You have got all of Jerusalem in an uproar about this Man. People are beginning to believe this message you're preaching. And by the way, you're not going to pin His death on us. Jesus wasn't who He claimed to be. We are not responsible for His death."

- Sadly by their own confession, the Sadducees rejected the Son of God. They refused to believe in Him as the Christ. They could see the lives that had been changed by the power of Christ, but they would not believe.
- Really this is main point of contention for us today. The world doesn't mind us believing in God as long as we don't mention Christ. You can be as religious as you want, just don't be a fanatic about Jesus. If you are going to line up with Jesus, you can count on being rejected by the world. He is the way to life eternal. He is the One who died for me and purchased my redemption. I'm going to stay with Him!

I. The Sadducee's Resistance

II. The Lord's Reassurance (19-20) – This road of life has its share of difficulty, but we do not walk alone. Jesus has promised to be there each step of the way. He will never leave us nor forsake us! Notice:

A. He Conquered their Prison (19) – [But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.](#) The Sadducees thought that had gotten rid of the apostles. They may have been in prison, but they were not forsaken. God had a work for them to do and was well able to meet their needs in performing His will.

- This world may bring difficulties to hinder our work, but God will prevail. He is able to pull down the walls that bind us and prevent our labor. It seems as if we lose more of our Christian liberty each year, but God can overcome the obstacles that we face.
- Satan may have backed you in a corner and you feel as if you've been trapped by his evil ways, but God can bring deliverance to you. There is no prison so dark or no wall so thick that God can't break through and release us from!

B. He Confirmed their Purpose (20) – [Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.](#) The Lord hadn't called these men to a life of silence; He called them to be fishers of men. They had the message of truth that the world needed to hear. Theirs was a life of purpose for the Lord. There were souls who needed to hear of the Savior and His power to save.

- We are not left here without purpose. We are the body of Christ. We have the greatest news that has ever been told. We are to be His messengers to a lost and dying world. Our lives will have its share of heartache, but we must never forget our obligation to lift up Jesus to those who need Him!
- Do you remember where you were when Jesus found you? Has He not made a significant difference in your life? Do you believe that He can do that for someone else? Church we have a purpose in life, living for the Lord and telling all that we can about His saving grace and love!

I. The Sadducee's Resistance

II. The Lord's Reassurance (19-20)

III. The Apostle's Confidence – It would've been awful easy to have thrown in the towel and walked away from the work God had called them to do. The religious leaders were opposed to them and they faced physical harm for their preaching.

- But we must understand these were not the average man; they had encountered the risen Lord. They had received the power of the Holy Spirit. There was a fire burning in their souls that couldn't be quenched, not by the Sadducees or the devil himself.
- We need to find that same confidence. I am by no means a Peter, but I have encountered the same risen Lord. He lives within my heart and I have the Spirit to guide and keep me. Hell may rage, but I have been redeemed; I belong to the King of glory. **I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!** Let's look at how their confidence was revealed.

A. Shown in their Actions (21a, 25) – **And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. [25] Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.** They were commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus any more. The confidence they had in Christ was stronger than the fear of men. They were found early in the morning teaching in the temple. I guarantee you they weren't teaching a legalistic message of the Sadducees, but of a risen Lord. They were unafraid of what man could do. **Mat.10:28 – And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.** Jesus can enable men to do the impossible for His glory.

- You might think that you can't accomplish much for the Lord, and I suppose in a way you are right. We can do nothing in ourselves, but if we possess the power of God in our lives, there is nothing that we cannot do! A Christian who is confident in the Lord's ability will take a stand and live up to the task that he is called to do! Do you believe that Jesus is able to give you the strength you need? If so, go for Him in assurance of His power. Their confidence was also:

B. Shown in their Allegiance (29) – Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.** When rebuked about their actions, the apostles declared their allegiance to God. They were well aware of what the high priest had said, but were committed to serving God no matter the cost. "You can put us back in that prison, but we are going to serve the Lord. We will obey God regardless of what you or anyone else says."

- Our world needs that type of allegiance today. Our churches need those who are going to serve the Lord no matter how much hell rages. We need those who will live for Jesus even if no one else around us does.
- The world didn't provide my redemption and the world can't take it away. I'm not living to please men; I'm living to please God. If we will commit our allegiance unto Him life will be much simpler. We will then have only One to please! I pray that God will give us a holy boldness in our day!

C. Shown in their Authority (30-32) – 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. The apostles weren't trusting in the authority of the religious order, or an appointment given by men, they were trusting in the authority of a risen Lord. They served the One who came out of the tomb alive, having conquered death, hell, and the grave. They served the One who ascended back to the throne of God where He is seated today. They were serving empowered with the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Trinity. They lived with God indwelling their mortal bodies.

- Do you realize what we have in Jesus? Our work for the Lord isn't dependent on the frailties of human flesh. We are living for and empowered by the God of heaven! He is the authority for what we do. As long as we are working through the power of God, we are more than conquerors. Surely One who has power over sin and death can supply what we need to live for Him!

I don't know what you are facing in your Christian life today, but I do know One who can supply your need. He is well able to give you victory in your life.

We might as well get used to the fact that the world doesn't accept us and wants us to be silent about Jesus. I want to live in a way that pleases my Lord.

Has Jesus spoken to your heart about trusting Him to accomplish the impossible? He has what you need to continue in the journey. You can obtain the strength you need to stand if you'll only come to Him for help.