

Acts 5 - Part 2

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holy boldness in proclaiming the Word of God, even in the face of persecution, and highlights the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 36:16

Scripture: Matthew 27:24-25, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Acts 5:17, Acts 5:28

Topics: "Bold Evangelism", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon on Acts chapter 5, the speaker emphasizes the importance of boldness in proclaiming the Word of God, even in the face of persecution. The early believers prayed not for relief from threats, but for boldness to speak the truth. The speaker highlights the need for Christians to share the message of Jesus Christ without pushing religion or their own church. He emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to boldly proclaim the gospel and encourages listeners to be filled with the Spirit and honor God in their lives.

Transcript

Again this morning, I'd like for us to look in the book of Acts chapter 5. I think more and more as you look at the events that are occurring in these early chapters of the book of Acts, and you'll see the development of this as you go along in your study of this book. But in the fourth chapter, we read concerning the desires of the hearts of those that were being witnesses for Jesus Christ, that even in the face of persecution, they prayed for something very special that sometimes it's a little difficult to understand why people pray in a certain way, but I think the Spirit of God was very carefully guiding the prayers that were made. And in that fourth chapter, when they prayed, they didn't pray for relief from the threats, for all of the things that were happening that were unpleasant, but they prayed that God would grant them boldness that they might speak the Word of God.

Now, as we have looked at this fifth chapter, there are a number of occasions when you realize that a lot could have been circumvented as far as a confrontation with the leaders, religious leaders that were opposing this new movement, this new cause, and Jesus Christ being the principal character as far as their preaching was concerned. They sought to silence them and they said to them, Don't preach anymore or teach in the name of Jesus. And of course, Peter gives out with, I think, that statement that indeed reminds us in a very pointed way that they had no intentions of speaking anything except that which the Spirit of God had directed them to speak.

They were going to honor the Lord. There was a boldness there. And as you think about the apostle Peter, so often we go back to that denial of the Lord.

We think of Peter when he cowered in the face of a little maid and he said, I don't know Jesus Christ. I don't know Him. No, I'm not one of those that were following Him.

No, you've made a tragic mistake. He denied the Lord. The others did as well, but I'm reminded that when the Lord turned and Peter's gaze met that of the Lord, we're reminded that he wept because he realized what he had done.

I'm not saying that critically because you and I at some point in our life, and we have to sadly say sometimes too often, we deny the Lord. So often we're guilty of not giving Him that proper place in our lives. And you know the fear of man, it brings a snare.

It's a terrible thing to be frightened by other people, by men. Yet we're living in a world that there's a sense of fearfulness because of all the things that are happening in the world. Yet when Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy says that God hath not given to us the spirit of fear.

The spirit of fear comes from some other source. I think we know that source. The devil wants to frighten us, and certainly Peter and the other apostles had every right to, as far as nature is concerned, the nature of a human being, to be frightened.

They were being threatened. They knew who their enemies were, but there was holy boldness in proclaiming the Word of God. I think it's worthy of repeating.

We must take a stand as those that claim to be evangelicals, those that claim to believe that this Bible is the Word of God. We must believe it. We must study it.

We must meditate upon it. We must let it become a part of our very being. If there's to be a proper demonstration of what the grace of God can do in our hearts and lives, we must let the Spirit of God take the Word of God and enlighten our minds, fill our hearts and souls, and pray that He will open our mouths to boldly proclaim the Word of God.

Remember this in the very first chapter. The last words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ were these, that He would send the Spirit of God, that He would send the Spirit of God to indwell and fill believers in Jesus Christ, that they might be witnesses concerning Him to this world in which we're living today. These apostles are fulfilling to the letter the desires of the Lord Jesus.

These are men and women that were filled with the Spirit of God. They had something to say. They had something to tell, and they were doing it with holy boldness.

Last week I didn't finish the latter part of the section that we were covering, but starting at about verse 28 of chapter 5, we're reminded that the high priest in the seventeenth verse, he rose up and all those that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, those that would not subscribe and believe in a literal bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and they were filled with indignation. Now, this is the high priest and those that were associated with him. They were jealous, in a sense.

That word, there is that connotation that indeed these men are getting too much attention from the people, and they were jealous of them, and they could see in them a threat in what they were presenting

concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. This represents a threat to all that we stand for. Why? Because they had denounced the Lord Jesus.

They had rejected Him, and as a result of that, anything that Peter had to say regarding any role, any part that they played in the betrayal, in the mockery of the trial that took place, all of the things that surrounded the shameful death that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died upon the cross, they did not want to be identified with that, as having any part in it. Peter would not let them forget it. No, not for a moment.

And when you get to the twenty-eighth verse, he says, we strictly command you not to teach in this name again. Do not preach in the name of Jesus, the Son of God, and look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and listen to this statement, and you intend to bring this man's blood on us. That's what your intentions are.

You're trying to preach in a way that you bring an indictment against us as being the reason why Jesus was crucified. Well, you know, they must have had very short memories. You tend to try to forget those things that you don't like to remember that are unpleasant.

But in the twenty-seventh of Matthew, if you remember when the Lord Jesus was in Pilate's court, Pilate did everything he could to try to release the Lord Jesus. He offered him Barabbas, and each time he made an overture to them, look, you want a sacrifice? You want someone to put to death that justly deserves death? I'll give you Barabbas. The religious leaders, the crowd said, no, we want Jesus, and we want him to be crucified.

Pilate makes a statement. He says, well, I'm going to let you have him, and he had him bring a basin of water. He washed his hand in that basin of water, and he said, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.

I want this to be recorded for posterity. I want everyone to know I am innocent. You see, his wife had already warned him, don't have anything to do with that.

There's something about that. It's mysterious, and I don't want you to have anything to do with it. His own soul was gripped.

He could find no fault in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he washes his hand in that basin of water, and he says, look, this innocent blood is not upon my hands. The verse that follows is the one that the religious leaders and the crowd had forgotten, and all the people answered Pilate and said, his blood be on us and our children. Listen, the chickens have come home to roost.

And, you know, if you listen to anything in the way of prophetic study today, and you think about the role that Israel and the Jew plays in this world scenario of the end times, you know that today many are subscribing to the thought that so much that has happened to the Jew is a direct result of their rejection of their Messiah, the crucifying and the putting to death of the Son of God. Let his blood be upon our hands and upon our children's hands. Peter could have said, you fellows don't remember very long, do you? It wasn't just a short while ago.

But you said, let his blood be upon our hands. Now you are saying, you're intending to bring all of the guilt that is associated with having this man's blood on our hands. Yes, his blood is on your hands.

There's a story that I'm told, I've never heard it before until just recently, concerning one of our presidents during the Vietnam War, President Johnson, LBJ as he was known, that because of all of the hate mail that he received regarding our involvement in that Vietnam War, his staff very carefully sought to shield him from all of this mail that was coming in. He was just being bombarded with letters. Mysteriously, one day there was a letter on his desk addressed to him.

He opened it, he read it, and in that letter he was told, You killed my son. You killed my son. It upset him.

He shared it with his wife. She immediately began an investigation to find out how this letter that he should have been shielded from, that should have been intercepted and never reached the President's desk, how it got there. They had a meeting of the staff, and out of all of this, they discovered that there was a woman that worked in the White House, and because of this close proximity to the President, she had had a son that was killed in the Vietnam War, and she wanted to get that message to President Johnson.

I understand that President Johnson was never the same after that. That really struck a note in his heart. Evidently he tried very hard to get this business of our being involved in that no-win affair in Vietnam, he wanted to do something to get us out of there, but he couldn't come up with the answer.

This woman said, You killed my son. And this article reminds us that President Johnson, he decided not to run for another term of office, completely wiped out by the thought that somehow perhaps he felt a sense of guilt. I'll tell you, when 50,000 young American men and women are killed in a no-win type situation, it causes some sober thinking.

It did that to President Johnson. The impact of being accused of killing the Son of God had its impact upon these religious leaders. They did not like being accused of killing the Son of God.

Well, when they continue to press upon Peter the fact that, You apostles, we don't want you preaching anything or teaching anything in the name of Jesus. Let's forget Jesus. And we're going to read in just a moment how that, because of so many things that had happened in the past, that one of those religious leaders said that sooner or later he was letting his own experience and his own wisdom show forth in just a little way, and he's going to make a suggestion that really makes sense.

But to stifle the voices of the apostles, listen, they had been witnesses of something that it is beyond the human mind really taking in all that was accomplished. Being so closely associated with Jesus Christ, and to be there when he died upon that cross, and then to be filled with the Spirit of God, the Lord Jesus said, I will send you another comforter, someone just like me, someone that will indwell you, someone that will take the things that I have spoken to you. He will expand your minds and help you to understand the deep significance of what I'm doing, why it is that I, the Son of God, likened unto the Lamb of God, a sacrificial lamb, why I should be killed, why I should have to die the shameful death upon the cross.

They didn't understand why. The whole thought to those disciples was something that was repulsive. They couldn't accept that whole concept.

What were they looking for? They were looking for their king. They were looking for a king that would reign over a kingdom in which there was the restoration of some of the respect and pride that went with being an Israelite. But that was not to be.

He was betrayed, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But for this hour came I into the world. The Son of God must die upon the cross.

And Peter says, you're expecting us not to preach that message that he left with us? Those things about Jesus Christ, we can't stop preaching those things. Is it better to obey God or to obey men? They had their answer. These were men that said they loved God.

These were men that said it was important to obey what the Lord had to say and to be His servant. Certainly, one must abide by those directions that were given from on high. They were familiar with that concept, and so Peter says, we must obey God.

We must do what He instructs us to do. The message that follows, and let's read from verse 29 down through the close of the chapter. Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.

When they heard this, they were furious and took counsel to kill them. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, held in respect by all the people and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. He said to them, Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.

For some time ago, Thutias rose up claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.

And this man, Judas of Galilee, rose up in the days of the census and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. Now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing.

But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest you even be found to fight against God. And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And daily in the temple and in every house they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. What are you going to do to shut these men up? What will it take? Obviously, all of the threats. Now, already they had been in prison, a jailbreak with angels participating.

The angels had come, opened up the doors, released the apostles. They had gone back to the temple, still preaching the same message, holy boldness. What are you going to do to shut these men up? Well, I can tell you this, as long as the Spirit of God has control of those men, you are not going to shut them up.

And beloved, we have said this so often, what the church needs today is men and women that name the name of Jesus Christ that are filled with the Spirit of God. A Spirit-filled man and woman that names the name of Christ, you are not going to shut them up. Be not drunk with wine wherein it is excess, but be filled with the Spirit of God.

A Spirit-controlled life is one that honors God. It is one that has a message for the world. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These men resented ever so strongly any indictment against them that they had anything to do with the shedding of the blood of the Son of God. But Peter so squarely places a blame right where it belongs. Pilate would have released the Lord Jesus.

You said, Let his blood be upon our hands and the hands of our children. That is where it is, and that is where it is today. Peter says, The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

You know, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's divine seal of approval upon what He did. God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. What human being would ever dare say in the light of what we have in the Word of God? I am no sinner.

I have not sinned. There is none righteous, no, not one. We have all sinned and come short for the glory of God.

And the Apostle Paul says when he writes to the Galatian church, If there was any other way to save a man's soul, if by keeping the law you could be saved, if by good works you could be saved, you tell me why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had to die upon the cross? To circumvent the cross, place no value upon the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, in a sense, is something that is so tragic to behold, something that is so sad to see when one would take a position that is so contrary to what is taught in the Word of God. Well, verse 31 tells us, God has exalted this person, Jesus Christ, to His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sin. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

He came to the nation of Israel, and they rejected Him. And you know, in Ephesians chapter 2, when we read that having come to His own, they rejected Him. That verse in John 1 says, of course, everyone that accepts Him, that then gave you the right or the authority to be the children of God.

But Ephesians 2 says that as Gentiles in this world, we were here and we had no hope. We had no covenant promise with God. But God hath highly exalted this person that the Jewish nation had rejected, its religious leaders had rejected and crucified.

God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every other name, Philippians chapter 2. And at the very name of Jesus, every knee would bow, every tongue would confess that He is Lord, He is God. Great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in flesh. Yes, God has dwelt among us, among the sons of men here upon the face of the earth.

He has been rejected. He was crucified. He shed His blood.

He that knew no sin was made a sacrifice for our sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Isaiah 52, just before you get to that passage that deals with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, reminds us that God hath highly exalted Him, given Him a place above all others. Today He is enthroned.

He is seated at the right hand of God. He intercedes on behalf of those that have trusted Him. And Peter says we are His witnesses to these things.

And also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him. The little account that is given concerning Gamaliel, this man in hearing all that was happening, realizing that these religious leaders, they were getting pretty riled up about all this, when someone becomes furious, when someone becomes

enraged at the very mention of a name, you know that probably they are a little bit out of control. And I think Gamaliel sensed that, and he said, look, I can cite to you some of the other so-called messiahs, those that people were following, and I can remind you that nothing really came of the whole effort.

In most instances, they got themselves killed, and that's what happened to Jesus of Nazareth. And their followers, they just melted into the crowd and were no longer any threat. I'm suggesting to you gentlemen that if this is of God, we don't want to resist God, and if it's of man, it'll come to nothing if he could have only read the historical record that had only been available to him concerning what has happened through the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

That's 2,000 years ago, and that message concerning Jesus Christ has spread across the face of the earth. Well, they did release them. They beat them again.

They released them. They warned them, don't preach in the name of Jesus anymore. Well, to show you that they didn't have too much respect for what they were saying, had no intentions of obeying what was contrary to the will of God, there comes a point in life where you may be called upon to even defy civil authority.

If it transgresses upon your faith, if someone were to tell us today that we can no longer assemble and as believers in Jesus Christ, we can meet together and fellowship together and have communion together and pray together, what would we do? There are many instances on record even now, countries that this has happened. You know, some people sometimes have the silly notion that the only place that God dwells in is in a building. Oh, no.

I think we've already looked at this enough to realize God dwells in the hearts of men and women. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become members of His body. We become members of the one, the true church, the body of Christ that is indwelt by His Spirit.

Regardless of where you send believers out across the face of the earth, we don't have to have a building to say we now can claim the presence of God. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. How wonderful it is to know that regardless of what happens, you know, I think if my life depended upon it and there was a threat upon my life, if we were not able to assemble and I knew other Christians, I knew where they lived, I think without question I'd make some attempt to contact them so that we could come together.

That affinity that believers have for believers to look and to read and study the Word of God together, to love each other and to pray together, you can threaten God's people, but believe me, I believe when persecution and trial comes, it brings out the very best in us. Maybe we need a little of that. At any rate, they told them, we're going to dismiss you and we're going to let you go free again.

And when they left, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of the Lord Jesus. And so, they went back home and they said, look, we'll have to break up the movement, too much pressure. No, you know I'm being facetious.

They went right back to the temple. He said, why don't you dodge all of this persecution and trial? That's the only way you're going to have the heat lifted. They went right back to the temple.

They went from house to house and they never ceased teaching and preaching Jesus as a Christ. I tell you what, they believed. They believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

They believed deep within their souls that as believers in Jesus Christ, we have a mission to accomplish. God is dependent upon you and me as Christians. He is dependent upon you and me to spread the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When we go out that door, there's a mission field out there. There are many, many souls in this world this morning and they're not saved. There's a heaven to be claimed through faith in Jesus Christ.

There's a hell to be shunned by accepting Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. Those that have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, those that have been cleansed from all the defiling effects of sin from their lives, new creatures in Christ Jesus, we have a message for the world in which we live.

Let's accept that challenge. You say, people won't like me. They'll say I'm too pushy with my religion.

Listen, we're not pushing religion. We are giving to the world Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We don't push religion.

We don't push Northgate Chapel. We want to tell people about the lovely, wonderful person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And may we do so.

Let us pray. Our Father in Heaven, we bow again in Thy presence and we thank Thee for an open Bible. We thank Thee for the words of the living God, and we believe faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Bless, we pray Thee, this morning, our time together. May it be profitable to each heart present here. May we go away from this place benefited to serve the cause of Christ in the world today.

We ask this in our Savior's precious name. Amen.

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