



The Gospel Continues to Spread

Acts 5:17–42



LESSON GOAL

The child will rejoice that man can do nothing to stop God from spreading His Gospel.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Explain why the Sanhedrin was jealous.
- Describe how prison did not stop the Gospel.
- Summarize the apostles' preaching before the Sanhedrin.
- Tell why Gamaliel encouraged the Sanhedrin to let the apostles go.

KEY VERSE

“And 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.”

—*Acts 5:38–39*

APPLICATION

- Proclaim the Gospel to your friends.
- Rejoice that God has power to accomplish His will.
- Examine if you would be willing to suffer persecution for the name of Jesus.

NEXT WEEK

Stephen Preaches the Gospel

Acts 6:1–7:60

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

Much to the disappointment of the Sanhedrin, the apostles continued to do miracles in Jesus’ name and the church continued to grow. Luke describes how Peter’s reputation had grown so much that people would bring the sick into the streets “so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them” (Acts 5:15). (Luke does not specify whether the people were healed or not when Peter passed by.) In addition to those inside Jerusalem, a “multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed” (5:16). The Sanhedrin was threatened by the growing number of those believers who met daily in Solomon’s Porch, the large portico along the eastern side of the temple (5:13). Luke records that “believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” (5:14). Because of the apostles’ prominence and the church’s growth, the high priest and the Sadducees were “filled with indignation” (5:17). Motivated by jealousy and a desire to preserve their position, the high priest (which could either refer to Annas or Caiaphas) and the Sadducees were committed to stopping the apostles from spreading the name of Jesus.

Prison Did not Stop the Gospel’s Spread (Acts 5:17–26).

Similar to how Peter and John were dealt with in Acts 4:1–3, the high priest and Sadducees threw the apostles in prison overnight until the Sanhedrin could meet the next day. The prominent and affluent Sadducees were worried about both maintaining their position as Israel’s religious leaders and preserving Israel’s tenuous peace with Rome. The Sadducees were concerned how Rome would view the growing multitude of believers who proclaimed Jesus to be King.

During the night, the apostles were freed from prison. The Lord sent an angel to open the prison doors and command the apostles, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:19–20). God wanted the apostles to continue proclaiming new life in Christ. The apostles faithfully obeyed and returned the next morning to the same place where they had been arrested the day before (5:21). Because sacrifices were offered each morning, there were many people present who heard the apostles’ proclamation of salvation. Even prison did not stop the Gospel’s advance!

As soon as the Sanhedrin met the next morning (“the council”), the high priest sent for the apostles, naturally expecting them still to be in prison (5:21). When the officers returned empty-handed and confused, the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the priests were at a complete loss (5:24). Although the prison was shut and the guards were still standing outside, the apostles were nowhere to be found (5:23). Imagine their embarrassment when someone came and reported:

“Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” (5:25). To make matters worse for the high priest and his cohorts, the officers who went to re-arrest the apostles had to do so “without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned” (5:26). The popularity of the apostles had grown so large that the officers were afraid of being killed in the temple complex if they hurt the apostles. Since the officers were afraid to use violence, the apostles must have peacefully circled around from the east side of the temple complex where they had been preaching to the west side where the Sanhedrin had assembled. All the time the Sanhedrin wondered what had happened, the apostles had been preaching in the temple!

Decrees Did not Stop the Gospel’s Spread (Acts 5:27–32)

When the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin, the high priest raised several accusations against the apostles. First, he accused the apostles of blatantly breaking the Sanhedrin’s previous command that they not “teach in this name” (Acts 5:28; cf. Acts 4:18). Second, he accused them of filling Jerusalem with “your doctrine” (5:28). The high priest continued to deny the authority of the apostles’ teaching. The apostles did not preach their own doctrine, but the truth the exalted Jesus had commanded them to proclaim. Third, the high priest accused them of trying “to bring this Man’s blood on us” (5:28). Even though the Jewish crowds had willingly accepted the responsibility for killing Jesus (Matt. 27:25), the priests and Sadducees hated the apostle’s preaching that they had been responsible (Acts 2:23, 36; 3:15; 4:10–11). Although they knew they were guilty, the Sanhedrin accused the disciples of trying to impugn them unfairly.

The apostles did not let the pressure of being before the Sanhedrin stop them from proclaiming the Gospel. Even though the Sanhedrin had decreed they stop preaching in Jesus’ name, the apostles boldly pledged obedience to God instead of men (Acts 5:29). Similar to the previous presentations of the Gospel in Acts, Peter and the apostles proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus (“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus”), the crucifixion of Jesus (“hanging on a tree”), the guilt of the Jews in Jerusalem (“whom you murdered”), the exaltation of Jesus (“Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior), and the necessity of repentance and the promise of forgiveness (“to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins”) (Acts 5:30–31). Instead of obeying the Sanhedrin’s decrees, Peter boldly proclaimed the apostles’ commitment to being Jesus’ witnesses (5:32). The apostles were joined in their witness by the Holy Spirit, who testified to Jesus through His filling the apostles and working miracles through them (5:32). Peter finished where he began: with a commitment to obey Christ. Unlike the Sanhedrin members who lacked the Holy Spirit, the apostles were obedient to Christ (5:32).

Plots Did not Stop the Gospel’s Spread (Acts 5:33–39).

The Sanhedrin hated the apostles for their authority, their unwillingness to stop preaching Christ, their Spirit-filled lives, their call for repentance and their insistence that the Sanhedrin was guilty of killing their Messiah. When they heard the apostles’ answer, the Sanhedrin was “furious and plotted to kill them” (Acts 5:33). Surprisingly, God used one of the Sanhedrin to prevent the murder of the apostles.

The Pharisee Gamaliel, “a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people” (Acts 5:34), urged the rest of the Sanhedrin to think before acting rashly. (Gamaliel was one of the most honored rabbis ever. Acts 22:3 reveals that Paul was one of his students.) Gamaliel began his argument by pointing to two failed Jewish revolutionaries, Theudas and Judas of Galilee (5:36–37). The movements started by both Theudas and Judas failed after each man died. Gamaliel next urged the Sanhedrin to leave the apostles alone (5:38). He reasoned that if “this plan or this

work is of men, it will come to nothing" (5:38). Just as the revolutionaries Theudas and Judas failed, these men would fail if their plans were only man's plans. But Gamaliel continued: "If it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God" (5:39). If the apostles really were sent by God like they claimed, the Sanhedrin could not stop the spread of their message. Gamaliel presented the Sanhedrin with a flawless argument. If the Sanhedrin let the men go, they would neither be guilty of killing men who were destined to fail or opposing men who God decreed would succeed (and ultimately oppose God Himself). Since Jerusalem was supportive of the apostles, it made much more sense to listen to the popular teacher Gamaliel than oppose his advice and risk a rebellion from the crowds.

Persecution Did not Stop the Gospel's spread (Acts 5:40–42).

The Sanhedrin agreed with Gamaliel. Before letting the apostles go, they flogged them and commanded them again not to "speak in the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:40). The apostles were most likely flogged with thirty–nine lashes, one less than the legal limit of forty (Deut. 25:3). Although they had just been punished severely (some men died who received 39 lashes), the apostles left the council "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41). The apostles were not persuaded by neither the Sanhedrin's command nor their punishment. Whether in the temple or in people's homes, "they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (5:42). Physical beatings would not stop the apostles preaching the Gospel.

Conclusion

The Pharisee Gamaliel was right: "If it is of God, you cannot overthrow it" (Acts 5:39). God's plan for the spread of the Gospel was unstoppable. Neither prison, nor man's decrees, neither murderous plots, nor 39 lashes were enough to stop the Gospel's spread. Although the opposition to the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection was just beginning to grow, God's plan was for it to spread. God's plan for the spread of the Gospel is just as unstoppable today as it was in the first century. It is unstoppable because it is not designed and accomplished by men but by God.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

What did the believers do for each other?

They sold their possessions and gave to anyone who had need.

What did Barnabas do with his money?

Barnabas gave his money to the apostles.

What did Ananias and Sapphira do with their money?
They gave part of the money to the apostles but they lied and kept some for themselves.

What happened to Ananias when he gave the money to Peter?
Peter asked him why he lied to the Holy Spirit and then he died.

What happened when his wife Sapphira when she came to Peter?
She also fell down and died.

What did to the people when they heard about Ananias and Sapphira?
They became very afraid when they heard the news.



Difficult Concepts

Jealousy: The high priest and the Sadducees resented the rising popularity of the fledgling Church. Concerned about losing their own prestige and position, they grew bitter towards the Apostles. The high priest and the Sadducees resented the Apostles most, because the Apostles were the leaders of the threatening Christian movement.

Gospel: The Gospel message focuses on Jesus as the One appointed by God to die for His people's sin. Jesus was crucified on a cross, but God raised Him from the dead. Jesus' death and resurrection guarantees salvation from sin for those who believe His death removes their sin. The good news is that people who realize they are sinners, unable to rescue themselves, can be considered righteous before God by trusting in Christ's sacrificial death and victorious resurrection.

False Teachers: Simply put, a false teacher is one who teaches anything contrary or in addition to the truth of God's Word. False teachers will always fail, because they lack a truthful foundation. Their teaching is based on their own ideas, and because they are merely flawed men their teaching is also fatally flawed. Only God's truth provides genuine spiritual reality, an unshakeable philosophical support, and lasting value.

Sanhedrin: The Sanhedrin was the Jewish supreme court. It consisted of seventy elders and was presided over by the high priest. The Sanhedrin handled religious and civil cases in Judea. In the time of Christ, the Sanhedrin still functioned, but was subject to Roman authority in certain civil matters.

Jealousy: To illustrate jealousy, give obvious preferential treatment to one student. Talk exclusively about and to the student who was first in line. Promise them the first or best snack. Tell the student they can have all the blocks, or let them have a special class privilege. Then, ask the other students how they felt about your preferential treatment. Ask if they thought you were being fair. Finally, clearly state that your preferential treatment was only for illustration purposes.



Obey My Voice

In today's lesson, the apostles chose to obey God rather than man. Pick one student to be blindfolded. The object for the game is for the student to obey your voice and your voice alone. After you spin him or her around several times, begin giving the blindfolded student several instructions to follow (this would be similar to "Simon Says," i.e., stand on one foot, scratch your head, etc.). The only catch to the game is that the other students will take turns also giving the blindfolded student instructions, trying to get him or her to obey their voice rather than yours. The blindfolded student will have to listen very carefully; making sure he or she

only obeys your voice. At the end of the game, explain to the students the choice the apostles had to make. They had to decide whether or not they were going to obey God or the Sanhedrin who told them to stop preaching the Gospel.



Stop Prop

Materials: copies of “Stop Prop” craft page, craft sticks, scissors, crayons, glue

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page. Have each child color the sign and then cut out the sign and the verse. Glue the sign to a craft stick and the verse to the back of the sign. During the lesson, children may hold up their sign when the prison, people, or plots could not stop the gospel.



Obey God Over Men

To encourage the students with the concept of obeying God rather than men when men’s instructions contradict God’s, give the students some examples of those in the Old Testament who were in similar situations. Some who obeyed God rather than man are Daniel (Dan. 6), Noah (Gen. 6), Shadrach (Dan. 3), etc.



Skit: God Is In Charge

To illustrate the concept of obeying God rather than man, create a skit where a student is put into a position of making the choice to obey God or man. It should be made clear to the students that God has set men in authority over us but when men’s instructions contradict God’s is when believers must obey God first.



Hide and Seek

In today’s lesson the apostles were put into jail for preaching the gospel. Have the students hide and another try to find them. After the students have been in jail for one minute they are free and must go hide again. If caught again they can be put in jail again.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Passage Outline

Prison did not stop the Gospel’s spread (Acts 5:17–26).

Decrees did not stop the Gospel’s spread (Acts 5:27–32).

Plots did not stop the Gospel’s spread (Acts 5:33–39).

Persecution did not stop the Gospel’s spread (Acts 5:40–42).

Introduction

Have you ever tried to stop the gas from escaping from a balloon that has been untied and let go? It is nearly impossible. Once the gas has an opening to escape from nothing can stop it from spreading into the air. The laws of science allow it to frustrate all efforts of man. Well, although on a much smaller scale, this illustration is very similar to the spread of the Gospel. In today’s lesson the Sanhedrin try very hard to stop the Good News of Christ from spreading. To see if they were successful let us now look at the arrest of the apostles recorded in Acts 5:17–42.



Lead-off Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: Why were those of the Sanhedrin filled with jealousy at the beginning of today’s lesson?

Answer: The members of the Sanhedrin were jealous because of the huge response the apostles were receiving there in Jerusalem. God was doing miraculous things through the apostles and the church was continuing to grow. Luke even writes that many from both within and without Jerusalem were bringing their sick before the apostles and that all were being healed. The Sanhedrin naturally felt threatened by this growing number of believers now meeting with the apostles. Their position as the religious leaders of Israel was in danger of being replaced by the influence of the apostles and their teaching of Jesus Christ.

LOQ: In their own jealousy, how does the Sanhedrin respond to this growing number of believers?

Answer: Because of their jealousy and desire to preserve their own position, the Sanhedrin becomes committed to stopping the apostles from spreading the name of Jesus. In order to do this, the Sanhedrin threw the apostles in prison overnight until they could meet the next morning.

LOQ: Did prison stop the apostles from preaching?

Answer: Even prison did not stop the Gospel from spreading. During the night, the apostles were freed from prison. The Lord had sent an angel to open the prison doors and command the apostles, "God, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life" (vv. 19-20). God wanted the apostles to continue proclaiming new life in Christ. The apostles faithfully obeyed and returned the next morning to the same place where they had been arrested the day before.

LOQ: What did the officers of the Sanhedrin find when they went to the apostles who they had sent to prison?

Answer: As soon as the Sanhedrin met the next morning, the high priest sent for the apostles. When their officers got to the prison what they found they could not explain. The prison doors were shut and its guards were still in place, yet the apostles were not inside. It was a miracle and truly a display of God's great power. The apostles were back in the temple preaching the gospel instead of being locked away in prison. Because the Sanhedrin feared the great crowd that had gathered around the apostles, they peacefully had the apostles removed from the temple and brought before the Sanhedrin.

LOQ: What did the high priest accuse the apostles to be guilty of doing?

Answer: The high priest accused the apostles of breaking several different rules. First, he accused them of breaking the Sanhedrin's previous command that they not teach in the name of Jesus (5:28). Second, he accused them of filling Jerusalem with their teaching (5:28). The apostles had preached the truth that the exalted Jesus had commanded them to proclaim. Since the Sanhedrin hated Jesus, they also despised the teaching of His name. Third, the high priest said that they were falsely accused of being guilty of killing Jesus. The religious leaders hated the apostle's preaching that they had been responsible for the death of Christ. Even though they knew they were guilty, the Sanhedrin accused the disciples of trying to accuse them unfairly.

LOQ: Did the false accusations of the Sanhedrin stop the apostles from preaching?

Answer: Even though the Sanhedrin had commanded they stop preaching in Jesus' name, the apostles felt it more important to obey God rather than men. Peter and the apostles therefore continued to preach the Gospel. They proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus, the guilt of the Jews in Jerusalem, and the exaltation of Christ. The apostles even told the Sanhedrin their need for repentance and the forgiveness of sin. The apostles were faithful witnesses unto Christ. As they continued in their obedience, the Gospel continued to spread.

LOQ: How did the Sanhedrin respond to the apostles' obedience to Christ?

Answer: The Sanhedrin hated the apostles for calling them to repent of their sin. When they heard their unwillingness to stop preaching Christ, the Sanhedrin became "furious and plotted to kill them" (5:33).

LOQ: Who does God use to prevent the murder of the apostles?

Answer: Surprisingly, God uses one of the members of the Sanhedrin to stop the murder of the apostles. A well honored and highly liked teacher among the

people named Gamaliel urged the Sanhedrin to leave the apostles alone. He reminded them that these men would fail if their plans were only the man's plan. If God were not with them they would eventually fail and the message of Christ would soon be forgotten. But on the other hand, if the apostles really were sent by God liked they claimed, the Sanhedrin could do nothing to stop the spread of the Gospel. Gamaliel was exactly right; if God were involved nothing would be able to stop the gospel. Since Gamaliel's argument made sense, the Sanhedrin decided to listen to him and not kill the apostles.

LOQ: What does the Sanhedrin do instead of kill the disciples?

Answer: Before letting the disciples go, the Sanhedrin flogged them (or whipped them) and commanded them again not to "speak in the name of Jesus" (5:40). After severely beating them, the Sanhedrin sent the apostles on their way.

LOQ: Did the beatings of the apostles stop the Gospel from spreading?

Answer: Even though they had been beaten severely, the apostles rejoiced that they could suffer on behalf of Christ who had died for them. They would not listen to the Sanhedrin's command nor their punishment. Where ever they went the apostles did not stop preaching Jesus as the Christ. Physical beatings would not stop the Gospel from spreading.

Summary

In today's lesson God does a mighty work to spread the Gospel. As the apostles heal the sick and preach God's truth, the religious leaders of Jerusalem become extremely jealous. Threatened by the apostles, the Sanhedrin had them thrown into prison. Prison would not stop the Gospel from spreading though. In the middle of the night God sent an angel to free the apostles. It was a miracle. When the officers of the Sanhedrin arrived at the prison, the cell was empty and the apostles were in the temple preaching Christ. In fear of the huge crowd that followed the apostles, the Sanhedrin peacefully remove them from the temple; accusing them of breaking several rules and commanding them not to preach the in Jesus' name. The commands of the Sanhedrin would not stop the Gospel from spreading. The apostles wanted to be obedient to Christ rather than man. They remained a faithful witnesses of Jesus, preaching to the Sanhedrin their need for repentance and the forgiveness of sin. Furious with the disciples, the Sanhedrin planed to have them killed just as they had killed Christ. God saves the apostles though, using one of the Sanhedrin's own members to convince them not to kill the apostles. Gamaliel knew that if God was behind the apostles, nothing would be able to stop the spread of the Gospel. So instead, the Sanhedrin had the apostles beaten. These beatings would not discourage the apostles from spreading the Gospel. They considered it a joy to suffer for Christ and continued to preach the Good News of Christ.

Application

What a comfort it is to know that nothing can stop God's plan for the spread of the Gospel. It is as unstoppable today as it was in the early church. Knowing this, those who follow Christ should be eager to share the Gospel with their friends. Even though this may bring persecution, each of us should be willing to suffer for the name of Jesus. Like the apostles, we should rejoice at the opportunity to suffer for the one who gave His life up for us; continually praying for God to save others through the Gospel just as He has saved us also.



Presentation Ideas

A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



The Gospel Cannot Be Stopped

One of the amazing things seen in today's lesson is how man is unable to stop God from spreading the Gospel. To illustrate this concept take a foam cup and punch several holes in it. Each time you come to a point in the lesson where the Sanhedrin try to stop the apostles from preaching the Gospel, place several objects in the cup (i.e., marbles, grass, foam peanuts, rocks, twigs, etc.). These objects may represent various things that might try to stop the Gospel. At the end of the lesson, take another foam cup that is full of water (and does not have holes in it) labeled the Gospel. To illustrate how nothing is able to stop the Gospel from spreading, begin pouring the water in the cup with holes. The student will observe how the water is able to make its way around the obstacles and through the holes of the cup. Just as nothing was able to stop the water, nothing is able to stop the Gospel from spreading.



Mock Trial

Advance Preparation: Set-up the room with five chairs in a semi-circle (facing the students), One chair on each side of the semi-circle (the witness stand & narrator), and 8 chairs facing the council for the officers and apostles to sit in. Tape an area of the floor and mark it "PRISON." Follow the diagram below:

Directions: Assign various students to portray each person involved in the passage. Give the students the script to read and act out in turn. Students read plain print and act out instructions written in italics. Reenact the lesson as a mock trial, getting the whole class involved in the incident. The students in the audience are to speak and act out whenever the narrator mentions the "people."



Act It Out

Create the scene that might have taken place in today's lesson. Teachers will dress up as the apostles and share the gospel with the students. At the end of the presentation they are arrested but miraculously released and preach the gospel again.

Praise and Worship

Jesus Paid it All

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Christ the Solid Rock

Trust and Obey

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



"Nothing Can Stop The Gospel"

Materials: craft page copied on cardstock for each student, scissors, crayons, glue, hole-punch, string

Directions: Pass out the craft sheet to each student. Instruct the students to cut around the four open Bible pages, and the stop sign shape. Allow the students time to color pictures on the Bible pages to illustrate each section of the passage. Once students are finished drawing pictures, instruct the students to punch holes were indicated and then thread a string through the Bibles and stop sign. Remind the students that nothing can stop the spread of the Gospel.



"The Gospel continues to spread"

Use this worksheet to reinforce the key truths of today's lesson. It is located at the back of this lesson.



2
3

Small Group Activity: "Bringing God Glory"

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. He or she can complete the page individually, in a small group, or at home.

Coloring Pages

Give each child a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

"...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..." —Acts 5:38b–39a

Stop Prop



“And 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.” —Acts 5:38–39

Mock Trial

Reenactment of Acts 5:12-42

SCENE 1: ACTS 5:12-16

Narrator, High Priest, council members, and Gamaliel: Walk on stage and sit in designated chairs.

Apostles: Stand in the center of the stage. Select a few people from the audience to “heal” and “cast demons out of.”

Narrator: And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.

People (audience): Applaud and shout praises to the apostles.

Narrator: And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women

Apostles: Bring a few men and women out of the audience to join the group of apostles.

Narrator: So that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

People: Select two students to carry another student (sick person) to the center of the stage, and lay down on the ground in front of the apostles.

Peter: Walk in front of the student so that your shadow is cast on him/her.

Sick Person: Stand up from the ground as though you are healed.

People: Rejoice! Another person has been healed by the apostles.

Narrator: Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

People: Four more students from the audience come on stage to be healed and exorcised of demons.

SCENE 2: ACTS 5:17-20

High Priest and council members: Stand up and begin shouting at the people and the apostles.

Narrator: Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation,

People: All people from the audience that came onto the stage return to their seats.

Narrator: and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

Officers: Arrest the apostles and put them in prison.

High Priests, council members, and Gamaliel: Exit stage to the right (opposite the prison).

Narrator: But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,

Angel: Open prison doors to release apostles. Then turn to the apostles and order them to: Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.

Narrator: And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught.

Apostles: Walk out of prison, back to center stage, and begin preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people in the audience.

SCENE 3: ACTS 5:21–32

High Priest, council members, and Gamaliel: Return to chairs on stage.

Narrator: But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

Officers: Walk to the prison to bring the apostles before the council. Look surprised when you realize the apostles are missing.

bles are missing.

Narrator: But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, saying,

Officer 1: Indeed we found the prison shut securely,

Officer 2: and the guards standing outside before the door;

Officer 3: but when we opened them, we found no one inside!

Narrator: Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them, saying,

Jew (sitting in the audience): Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" Point to the apostles.

Narrator: Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

Captain of the temple and officers: Bring the apostles before the council and sit them in the designated chairs.

Narrator: And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them,

High priest: Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?

Council Members: Shake their heads in agreement.

High Priest: And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!

Narrator: But Peter and the other apostles answered and said:

Peter and Apostles (speak simultaneously): We ought to obey God rather than men.

Peter: The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

Apostle 1: Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior,

Apostle 2: to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Peter and Apostles: And we are His witnesses to these things,

Apostle 3: and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.

SCENE 4: ACTS 5:33-42

Narrator: When they hear this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.

High Priest and Council Members: Gather together and whisper.

Narrator: Then on 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.

Officers: Lead the apostles off the stage.

Narrator: And he said to them:

Gamaliel: Stand up and speak. Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas 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. After 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. And 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.

High Priest and Council Members: Shake heads in agreement.

Narrator: And they agreed with him,

Officers: Lead apostles back on stage and take turns scourging them.

Narrator: 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.

Apostles: Walk off the stage rejoicing in Jesus name.

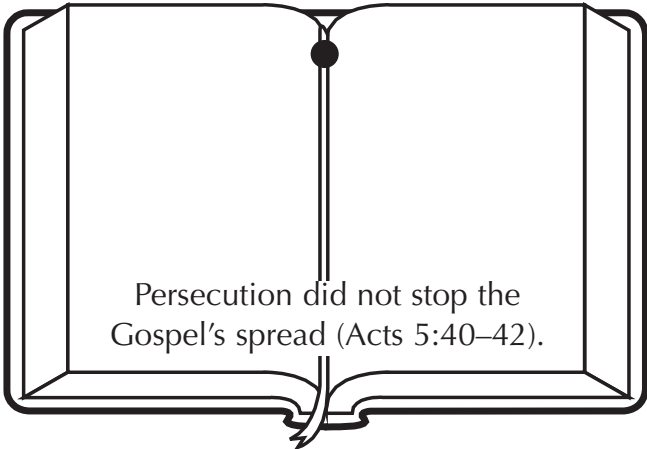
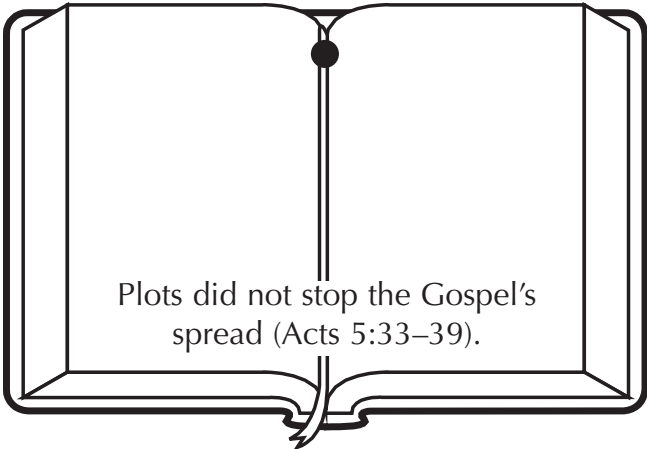
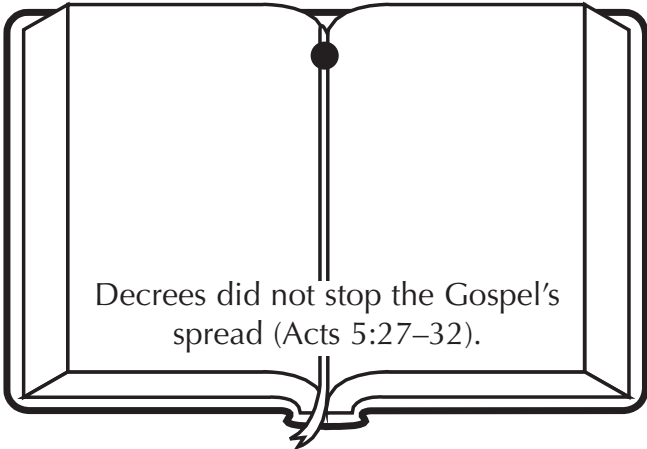
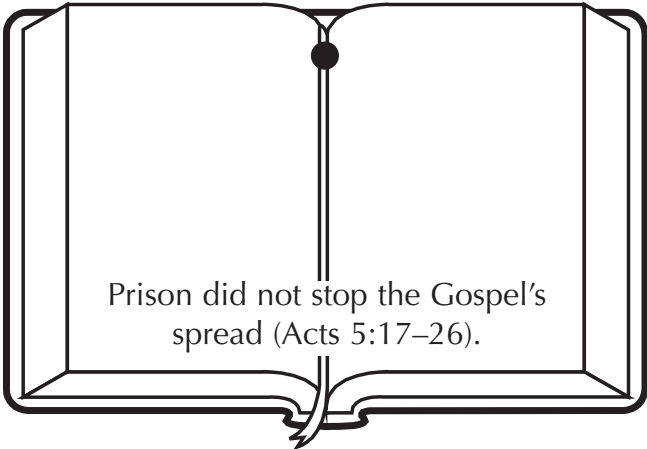
Narrator: So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

High Priest, Council Members, and Gamaliel: Exit stage.

Apostles: Walk back on stage and begin sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with the audience.

Narrator: And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Nothing Can Stop the Gospel



The Gospel continues to Spread



Acts 5:17-42

Name _____

1. In Acts 5:17, the disciples were arrested and put into _____.

2. Who let the disciples out of prison? _____

3. The angel told the apostles to go preach the Gospel in the _____ (5:20).

4. In Acts 5:29 Peter said to the high priest, "We ought to obey _____ rather than _____" (5:29).

5. What did the religious leaders plot to do to the apostles?

6. Who advised the council to leave the apostles alone? _____

7. Fill in the blanks from Acts 5:42.

"And _____ in the temple, and in every house, they did not
cease teaching and preaching _____ as Christ."

Bringing God Glory

“And 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.” —Acts 5:38–39

Did you know that nothing can stop God’s will? And when His will is that the Gospel be spread you can be sure that it will happen. In today’s Bible lesson, Peter shared the Gospel through his teaching. Nothing could stop God’s Word from being preached because God’s Word brings God glory.

Unscramble the first word in each sentence below to find out what tried to stop God’s Word from being preached:

1. **irsnpo** _____ did not stop the Gospel’s spread.
(Acts 5:17-26)
2. **leppoe** _____ did not stop the Gospel’s spread.
(Acts 5:27-32)
3. **toslp** _____ did not stop the Gospel’s spread.
(Acts 5:33-39)
4. **ouspnteerci** _____ did not stop the Gospel’s spread.
(Acts 5:40-42)

God is pleased when His Word goes out and people are saved. Nothing can stop His will.

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God is pleased when His Word goes out and people are saved. Nothing can stop His will.

Nothing can stand against God's will, and He wants you to stand unmoveable too. In Phillipians 4:1, Christians are told to stand fast in the Lord. That's what Peter did when he was thrown in jail, and when he was told by the Sanhedrin to quit preaching God's word. He depended on God's power to keep him strong. How can you stand strong in God's will?

I can stand strong in God's will by:

Do you desire to do God's will and bring Him glory?

If the desire of your heart is to bring Christ glory, you can be sure that He will give you the desires of your heart. This week, I can bring God glory by:

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"But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 'Go stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.'"

—Acts 5:19–20



"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

—Acts 5:42

