

# When Courage Becomes Normal

## Introduction

We're continuing our series on "Reach" we want to get better at reaching out!

This week I heard two great stories from Church members.

- HEALING PRAYER STORY - "Well it's just what you do isn't it!"
- SACRIFICIAL GIVING STORY – a story of remarkable generosity – someone doing what seemed right

As I read this week's passage, I realised the courage of the disciples was normal to them. **Read Acts 5:17-42**

## Looking in.

The rulers were members of the "Sadducees Party" v17, a particular Jewish group who were in charge. They were upset by the disciples, gaining converts and helping the sick.

- We'll **shut them up** – but they keep talking. We'll **lock them up** – but have angels with door keys!
- We'll **beat them up** – but they walk away praising God MORE! We'll kill them – but what if it is God, we'll be working against him!

Imagine the leadership in desperation – We cannot stop them – the disciples are unstoppable!

- Is that us? Could that be us? Why not? No Seriously.....Why not??

## Gamaliel

Gamaliel was a highly respected leader and the Apostle Paul's mentor (Acts 22:3)

- He calls for calm and reminds them of previous rebellions that came to nothing.
- If this **is** from God we won't stop it. But if it's not from God, it will die out like the previous ones.
- But he wasn't kind to the disciples, they still got beating – but went away praising God!

How were the disciples so unstoppable?

## 1. The Gospel Alive

v30-32 – An innocent man, killed like a guilty man. A prisoner set free from death - Jesus raised to life.

v18-20 – The (innocent) apostles imprisoned. Then God sets them free - like Jesus coming out of the tomb.

They weren't just **knowing** the gospel – they were **living** it! Are you?

When you live the gospel, courage becomes normal

## 2. We must obey God

V29 "*we must obey God!*" Peter replying to their threats.

That's when Courage become normal – when you know you have to obey God

- Ananias and Sapphira still clear in the memory.
- Also compassion - they want the sick to be healed - they want the people to find freedom in Jesus

**Obedience demonstrated** - V21 "*At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people*" They'd escaped – but they didn't now run and hide. Not just then, but the next day and the next day and the next day (v42)!

Q. When were you last obedient to God against your own plans or ideas? Q. What decisions are you making right now? Is obeying God your top priority?

When pleasing and obeying God comes first for you - Courage become normal

### 3. Suffering was part of their Gospel understanding

V 41 *"The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."* They weren't questioning whether their strategy had been correct because they were now bruised and bleeding?

I met a church planter from the Middle East, *"we're ready to die if we need to"*. He understands that death is not defeat – suffering is not the opposite of success.

**Easy Gospel?** - Do we accidentally preach a gospel of "come to Jesus and life will be easy" – That's not true.

- Jesus said *'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'* John 16:33
- 30 years later, Peter wrote these words – maybe still bearing scars from that day....**1 Peter 4:12-16**

Don't be surprised when tough stuff happens.

**Unless suffering is a part of our understanding**, when we hit a problem, we can immediately think, "the gospel wasn't right – God's not real – I'm out!"

But when we realise that suffering is part of the gospel - Courage become normal

### Conclusion

- The spread of the Gospel needs courageous men and women.
- The spread of the Gospel need normal men and women to take it out.

This passage shows us what it looks like **when Courage become normal**.

I want us to be a courageous church – unstoppable for the gospel.

- I'm not going to dare you to do something stupid this week and report back...
- I want to draw you to Jesus – **let courage find you this morning**.

I pray that the Holy Spirit comes and fills you again – bringing truth alive.

I pray that courage finds you today and every day