

Sermon Notes

Obedience (and Joy) in the Face of Persecution and the Mysterious Work of God

5:17-8:4

Christian Sanich, 12/9/2018

Text sermon questions, during the sermon, to (602) 824-8030

5:17-42 **Apostles arrested and set free - by God and Gamaliel**

We must obey by testifying about Jesus.

Despite consequences, they obediently went and spoke again.

And again, they proclaimed Jesus to the council.

After being beaten, they *rejoiced*, and every day they kept preaching Jesus.

God wants us to continue caring the testimony of Jesus, in obedience to God, despite threat or actual persecution.

6:1-7 **Appointing of servant-leaders, and introduction of Stephen**

There were spiritual qualification for the servant-leaders.

6:8-15 **Stephen, a man filled with the Holy Spirit, couldn't be contended with. But they tried and falsely accused him.**

Stephen is an example to us. We should aspire to be like him.

(ref.: Matt. 10:18-20)

Obedied God, and seemed at peace with whatever happened.

7:1-53 **Stephen's defense and accusation against the Jews**

Abraham obeyed God, and God worked toward the future.

God was carrying out a plan through Joseph, through wild events.

Similar with Moses.

Stephen accused the Jews of disobeying God's Law.

God was going to use this event with Stephen in a surprising way, to spread the gospel.

7:54-60 **They killed Stephen, but he didn't seem disappointed.**

8:1-4 **Stephen was murdered, the church was greatly persecuted, but God used it to spread the gospel of Christ to the world.**

What is your response to this?

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Application questions for 12/9/18 sermon

Acts 5:17-8:4

Obedience (and Joy) in the Face of Persecution

(Try to have everyone answer this question.)

What is something that in the last couple months you have said you wanted to work on, and how are you doing with that?

These questions assume you know the passage at least from hearing the sermon. If you didn't hear the sermon, you should read at least Acts chapter 6.

Look at Acts 6:3-5. What must have characterized Stephen even before he was selected to leadership, which made him eligible for leadership? Talk about what you think each of those qualities mean.

(Try to have everyone answer this question.)

What do you think it would look like for you to be characterized by those qualities - what would you be doing, what would you be doing differently, in your church, in ministry, and even other aspects of your life?

Look at Acts 6:9-10. What was going on with Stephen, what was he able to do, and how was he able to do it?

Is there something similar (although not exactly the same) that we should be doing, and how should we go about doing it?

(Try to have everyone answer this question. It doesn't need to be a long answer.)

To be behaving that way in your life, is there some change you need to make?

Stephen was being put on trial and falsely accused. Look at Acts 6:15. At the moment he was facing such difficulties, what do you think it might mean that Stephen's face looked like the face of an angel?

You have discussed how Stephen lived, but how do you think Stephen must have felt about how he had lived that put him in this mental state at that moment?

(Try to have everyone answer this question.)

Is there some way that Stephen inspires you, to who you want to be, something you want to do?

Do you have a question for the group? It might be something you don't understand that others could help with, or something you think should be covered that hasn't.