

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 8 September 2024

**Sermon Title** : Faith Tested

**Speaker** : Rev Peter Koh

**Text** : Acts 5:17-42

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As Christians we often face challenges when we try to share the gospel with others. Some might dismiss our faith while others might already have a strong belief of their own and do not wish to listen to what we have to share. Sometimes we are even tested and challenged to prove that our God is real.

The apostles had to face an even tougher situation in Acts Chapter 5, and yet they did not stop sharing the Word. They were put in jail, and warned and threatened to stop sharing the Gospel, but when an angel of the Lord appeared to release them and told them to return to the Temple to continue preaching, they did as were told. Even when they were beaten/flogged, they rejoiced for having suffered disgrace for Jesus, and did not stop teaching and proclaiming Jesus is the Messiah.

Let us learn from the apostles how they remained faithful even when their faith was tested.

## **Outline**

- A. Restrained from Witnessing (vv.17-19, 28, 40)**
- B. Rescued and Restored to Witness (vv. 19-25)**
- C. Reasons to Witness (vv.26-42)**

## **Restrained from Witnessing**

The apostles were:

- Imprisoned (v.19)
- Ordered not to share (vv. 28, 40)
- Beaten (v.40) - most likely by flogging

Despite their differences, the priests (Pharisees) and the Sadducees who do not believe in resurrection, came together to stop the apostles from preaching.

- These Jewish leaders were afraid and jealous; afraid and guilty that Jesus' blood was on their hands and jealous of the apostles' influence on the people as they were losing their grip and influence. They were afraid to lose their power and control over the people due to this new phenomenon about Jesus, His resurrection and

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ascension to heaven and the Holy Spirit. Because of jealousy, the religious leaders even resorted to using their authority over the Truth and compromised.

We may likewise find ourselves unable to share the Word because it is against the rules (authorities) in schools or in the marketplace.

- The apostles however, continued to preach and they said that they "must obey God rather than human beings" because they were very convicted.

## **Rescued and Restored to Witness**

- Rescued by angel (v.19) – God intervenes according to His will and timing
- Restored to witness (v.20)

When we are in trouble, we can trust that God will rescue us and restore us back according to His will, purpose and timing.

- The disciples were restrained but God's divine intervention freed them from jail and the guards got to witness a miracle as they found the jail still securely locked.
- The apostles obeyed with courage and preached in the Temple courts knowing that this was the very reason they were jailed in the first place, because they were convinced this was the instruction from God and they stayed true to their earlier proclamation that they must obey God.

Let us likewise guard our hearts from jealousy found in the religious leaders and let us be like the apostles who remained faithful even after going through persecutions.

## **Reasons to Witness**

- Christ is risen and exalted (vv.30-31)
- God has made us witnesses (v.32)
- God's will and purpose (vv.38-39)
- The apostles were confident because they knew and had witnessed first-hand Christ risen, exalted and ascended into heaven. The apostles had an encounter with God which made them witnesses for God. They were convinced and received His calling to make disciples. (Matthew 28)

What about us in our modern day? Are we likewise witnesses of the Good News and of God's goodness in our lives? Have we tasted God's deliverance and received eternal life from God? Are we convinced and sure of our faith in God, or are we still wavering?

- On the day of Pentecost, Jesus poured out His Holy Spirit which convicts us of our sins. Without the Holy Spirit we would not be able to experience God's love and power. The Holy Spirit also enables us to have spiritual gifts to serve others and touch lives. When we start serving others, we get to witness God's miracles just like how the apostles did.

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## **Who will you Trust?**

In verse 34, we are introduced to a highly respected Pharisee Gamaliel (Paul's Jewish teacher), who convinced the high priest and the religious leaders to let the apostles go. However, we read from his reasoning that he was sitting on the fence waiting to see if what the apostles were doing was from God. (vv.38-39). Likewise, we often try to sit on the fence to be politically-correct instead of standing firm on the truth like the apostles.

- May we not sit on the fence but be like the apostles in their faith, and trust in Jesus to live with conviction that we are serving a living God and suffering for His name is worth the sacrifice.

## **CONCLUSION**

Though we may not realize it, we are often making decisions based on whether we trust in God with our whole being, or we trust the world. If we trust God, let us truly be convicted that Jesus is our Saviour and Lord of our whole being; our mind, our spirit, our physical body and our emotion, so we will not stop teaching and proclaiming Jesus is the Messiah even when our faith is tested.

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# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?
  
2. Appoint someone to read Acts 5:17-42 slowly.
  - a. How would you have reacted to being jailed, warned and beaten for preaching about Jesus as the Messiah?
  - b. Compare your reaction with the apostles' reactions to being jailed, warned and beaten for preaching about Jesus as the Messiah. What does this tell you about your conviction in Jesus as Saviour and Lord?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 3a. What were some obstacles you faced when witnessing for Christ?
  - 3b. How did you react to those obstacles?
  - 3c. (i) How has God's deliverance for the apostles from jail impacted you?  
(ii) What would you have done differently in 3b. after hearing this sermon?
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4. Just like the apostles, we are called to be God's witnesses and the apostles have given us an example of witnessing with great faith even when their faith was tested.
    - a. Why were the apostles able to have such immense faith and how has their faith impacted the growth of the church?
    - b. What hinders you from being as convicted as the apostles in your faith?
    - c. How can your group members help or encourage you to overcome 4b above?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your personal testimony on how you have experienced God's miracle when your faith was tested.

OR

Give thanks to God for He had given us His Holy Spirit that enables us to have spiritual gifts to serve others and allows us to experience God's love and power. Pray for God to give us the faith to be effective witnesses for Him in this world.

6. As a group, pray that you will encourage one another to be open in sharing about the obstacles that you face as you witness for Jesus in your lives to the people and community around you. Pray also that every member would support and keep each other accountable in your faith journey so you may grow in your relationship with Jesus so your faith may increase to be effective witnesses for God in your modern circumstances.

### Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Holy Forever – Chris Tomlin

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHgxKemCRk&ab\\_channel=ChrisTomlinVEVO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHgxKemCRk&ab_channel=ChrisTomlinVEVO)

2. There is One Gospel – CityAlight

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GZuSivURPk&ab\\_channel=musicmeetsheaven](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GZuSivURPk&ab_channel=musicmeetsheaven)

3. Find Us Faithful – Steve Green

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKT5BCmvmq0&ab\\_channel=BrianBontes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKT5BCmvmq0&ab_channel=BrianBontes)

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