

I. IN THE PRISON

- A. The two-party religious system of the Jews
 - 1. The office of the High Priest had become a political office
 - a. It was supposed to be a life-long position held by a godly man
 - b. NUM 35:28 – “Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.”
 - i. If someone had killed another by accident (manslaughter)
 - ii. They could run to one of the Cities of Refuge and be safe
 - iii. But they had to STAY there until the high priest’s death
 - c. That means that the office was intended to be life long
 - d. Not an appointment
 - 2. But things had changed and become despotic
 - a. LUKE 3:2 – “Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”
 - b. Now they seem to have terms, but keep it all in the family
 - c. JOHN 18:13 – “And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.”
 - 3. And it was the Sadducees and the Republicans
 - a. Sorry, the Democrats and the Pharisees
 - i. I mean the Sadducees and the Pharisees
 - ii. Sadducees PARTICULARLY hated Jesus’ RESURRECTION
 - iii. The Pharisees hated the preaching against sin and pride
 - iv. They BOTH hated anyone who worked against their power
 - b. They were “filled with indignation”
 - c. WEBSTERS – “Anger or extreme anger, mingled with contempt, disgust or abhorrence.”
 - i. It was for jealousy (“I deserve what you have”).
 - ii. Religion often “hates” the spiritual (because of pride)
 - iii. If religion is what man does for God and Salvation is what God has done for man, you see why Works hates Grace!
 - iv. The flesh wants to “save” and “justify” itself!
- B. They were put in prison by man but set free by God (vs. 19)
 - 1. We are Biblicists and therefore SUSPICIOUS of metaphor
 - a. But this is a wonderful picture of Salvation in real-life events
 - b. “I” was in sin’s prison, sent there by the sin in my flesh
 - c. DOOMED to die there, BUT JESUS came and set me free!
 - 2. An angel set them free – a MESSENGER from God
 - 3. And the MESSENGER brought them orders from Head Quarters

- a. They were commissioned to go BACK into the Temple to PREACH
 - b. Go. Stand. Speak. A three-word message for Christians!
 - i. Don't stay here in prison. Don't go to friendly shores
 - ii. Attack the enemy's territory. TAKE IT!
 - iii. And once you do, STAND there. Don't be moved!
 - iv. SPEAK, don't be silent, PROCLAIM the Gospel
 - c. PSALM 30:12 – "To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever."
- C. They obeyed! (vs. 21)
- 1. And when the High Priest called the council together and all the senate
 - a. I'm sure they wasted a lot of time. Probably had donuts.
 - b. So certain of their lordly positions above the rabble beneath them
 - c. Well, I guess we better call those heretics and find them guilty
 - 2. But when the they officers came (vs. 22) SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT!
 - a. What do you mean "they're not there?!!!!?"
 - b. And then another one came in, "You mean those guys out there in the temple? I just came from there, they have quite a crowd..."
 - c. They had to bring them in without violence (vs. 26) Pretty please
 - 3. Today we will see Christians STANDING DURING PERSECUTION
 - a. We see them in the prison, we see them in the temple,
 - b. We see them in the council chamber, and in fellowship
 - c. And most importantly, we see them in EVERY HOUSE

II. IN THE TEMPLE

- A. Men may be bound in prison, but the Word of God cannot be chained!
 - 1. 2 TIM. 2:9 – "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."
 - 2. And no wonder! For Jesus Christ IS the very Word of God in flesh!
 - 3. JOHN 1:1 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
- B. There is NO power like the Word of God
 - 1. JOHN 1:3 – "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - a. The creation of EVERYTHING we've ever seen or WILL ever see
 - b. Is nothing to our God – He spoke, and it was created
 - c. He exists and it STAYS created
 - d. COL. 1:17 – "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 2. While that is power beyond our greatest imagination
 - a. It is not the most important power of the Lord to ME!
 - b. The greatest power God has ever shown me, is His Salvation

3. ROMANS 1:16 - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
- C. And they preached in the Temple – and people HEARD the Word of God
1. They were instructed to tell the “words of this life.”
 - a. JOHN 10:10 – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”
 - b. There is NO life outside of Jesus Christ
 - c. People THINK they are living the good life
 - i. Drinking, partying, spending time pursuing sin
 - ii. But that is EMPTY! USELESS! OF NO ETERNAL MERIT!
 - iii. Did you know that PROV. 21:4 says – “An high look, and a proud heart, *and* the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.”
 2. In JOHN 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 3. But look – they are TEACHING the people (vs. 25) – INSTRUCTING THEM
 - a. How to get a hold of REAL life, not the fake distraction of sin
 - b. And such a crowd had formed that they had to ask (vs. 26)
 - c. They were obedient and went to SPEAK in the Temple

III. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

- A. And their story didn’t change in the Council Chamber
1. We told you not to teach in this name (vs. 28)
 - a. You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine (teaching)
 - i. WE should fill OUR Jerusalem with Bible doctrine!
 - ii. People in this city need to know that there’s a church here
 - iii. A way of Salvation, a way to have LIFE
 - iv. And to have it MORE abundantly
 - b. You intend to bring this man’s blood upon us
 - c. Yes! In fact, there was no secret there!
 2. In Matthew, after Pilate washed his hands...
 3. MATT. 27:25 - Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”
- B. They didn’t COMPROMISE the Gospel (vs. 29)
1. There is likely coming a time when we better have some grit about us
 2. Where we better be able to answer for ourselves
 3. And STAND in the time of persecution
- C. And they gave the council the Gospel AGAIN!
1. They told them in Chapter 4
 2. And now they get a second chance to give the council the TRUTH

3. Never miss an opportunity!

IV. IN THE FELLOWSHIP

- A. And the Council had to let them go again – because of a Pharisee (vs. 34)
 1. This man was well respected and wise – known as a great teacher
 2. The Apostle Paul was brought up at his feet (ACTS 22:3)
 3. It's ironic that a Pharisee shut down the Sadducee council
- B. He reasoned with the council – it was LOGICALLY sound
 1. We've seen this before – if it is of men, then nothing will come of it
 2. Just like before – but if it's from GOD, you CANNOT overthrow it (vs. 39)
 3. He's right!
- C. And the fellowship of the saints in the Church at Jerusalem prospered!
 1. They were GLAD to be counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus
 2. They had fellowship, one with another, but also with God
 3. After all, He suffered for us!
 - a. 2 COR. 5:21 – “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”
 - b. Since He gave all for us, we owe our ALL to Him!
 - c. Right now, we don't have a lot of fellowship with those early churches in suffering and persecution
 - d. But we may very soon...

V. IN EVERY HOUSE

- A. They talked about Jesus Daily, no matter where they were (v.42)
 1. They were steadfast and “ceased not to teach and preach Jesus”
 2. We should be like that today in OUR church
 3. 1 COR. 15:58 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
- B. What's clear here is the emphasis on JESUS CHRIST
 1. They made Him the CENTERPIECE of their lives – in the temple, the home
 - a. Anywhere they went, they had His name on their lips!
 - b. He wasn't just a visitor invited in, He was EXPECTED every day!
 2. He LIVED there! Does Jesus LIVE in your home? In your life?
 3. If you are Saved and Jesus isn't the center of your life...
 - a. You can change that today! Do business with God
 - b. Make Him your starting point
 - c. Let Him build your life around Himself
- C. If you're not Saved today, let me introduce you to Lord
 1. He truly is the Way, the Truth, and the Life...
 2. He truly does give life and that life more abundantly
 3. Be Saved Today!