

# The will of God and our obedience | Acts 5:12-42 | 1/24/16

- The apostles were obeying God by preaching in the name of Jesus while opposing the religious leaders. | Acts 5:12-16
  - **Read Acts 5:12-16**
  - There was great preaching and healing being performed through the apostles by God.
  - Solomon's Colonnade (portico) turned into a frequent gathering spot for the early church to hear preaching and to have the sick healed.
  - This was in direct opposition the religious leaders who previously arrested them.
    - Acts 4:18-20
    - When Peter and John were arrested previously they were given strict instruction to never speak of Jesus ever again.
    - But as they stated they were unable to stop doing this because they were going to obey God.
  - There were many who praised the work the apostles were doing but still feared man instead of God. – V13
    - While the apostles were not scared of the Jewish leaders many others were and they praised the work they were doing but were to scared to join them.
    - This was likely those who were unbelievers in Christ but certainly approved of the works they were doing, but were to scared of physical persecution.
    - **Do you think there are those today who do the same? That respect and praise what Christians do but are to afraid of what others may say if they themselves started to believe in Jesus?**
  - Many believers came from hearing the Gospel message being preached by the apostles.
    - The obedience of the apostles in preaching the Word of God was giving those listening an opportunity to hear the Gospel which cultivated saving faith in their hearts.
    - God calls preachers and all Christians to proclaim His Word so that they can hear the Word and believe.
      - Romans 10:14-15
        - "But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"
        - God calls, we listen and obey, we proclaim His Word, the lost listen, the lost answer God's call upon their hearts and believe.
      - This is why obeying God is so critical that we share the Gospel because true saving faith is cultivated from hearing it.
        - Romans 10:17
          - "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard come through the message about Christ."
    - The acts of healing being performed through the Apostles was significant as all who came before them were healed.
      - Verse 16 tell us that all were healed. The Holy Spirit was giving signs and proofs that the teachings of the apostles were valid.
      - God used these to authenticate the teaching of the Apostles so that everyone would know that it was truly from God.

- Hebrews 2:4
  - “At the same time, God also testified by signs and wonders, various miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy Spirit according to His will.”
- It was God’s will and an answered prayer
  - Acts 4:29-30
  - These Christians obeyed God and wanted Him to use them to proclaim the glory of God and He answered their prayers.
    - This was a prayer request that was in the will of God to answer.
  - While God does not use apostles healing mass peoples today His miracles are prevalent and He distributes them according to His will.
- The Apostles are once again arrested, but are miraculously freed by God. | Acts 5:17-24
  - **Read Acts 5:17-24**
  - The jealousy of the high priest and the Sadducees caused them to arrest the apostles once again.
    - They were so furious that these apostles had disobeyed their direct order and were openly preaching once again in the name of Jesus Christ whom they crucified.
      - Not to mention the healing that was terrible!
    - So they have them arrested again and put them in jail.
  - God’s will was not going to be thwarted by man or Satan.
    - God intervened with the arrest of the apostles and rescued them in a miraculous way.
    - By sending an angel who opened the doors to their jail cells and lead them out without any of the guards being aware.
      - In fact, the cells were locked and the guards were still standing watch.
        - Acts 5:23
    - Even though man (and ultimately Satan) desired for these apostles to be locked up and killed, it was not in the will of God.
      - While later on they would die as martyrs for Christ it was not yet their time.
      - **God still had work for them to do and neither man nor Satan was going to thwart the will of God.**
    - This was also recognized by the Pharisee named Gamaliel
      - Acts 5:38-39
        - “And now, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown, but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrown them. You may even be found fighting against God.”
      - This Pharisee rightly understood that if the works the apostles were doing was truly from God then man could not overcome it and that they would be fighting against God.
    - If it is man’s work it can fail, but if it is God’s work that is done according to His will then it cannot be overthrown.
      - The plans of man that are for his own selfish glory, satisfaction and out of the will of God CAN BE overthrown.
        - There is nothing to uphold the workings and selfish desires of man that is permeant.
        - The plan of the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus and get rid of this “Jesus movement” seemed flawless in their eyes. But their plans were overthrown by God.

- This does not mean that all things that are evil fade away however.
  - His advice that all things that are evil will fade away isn't true because we see that Satan keeps a lot of false and evil things alive and well.
  - But if it is in God's will to overcome then they can be.
- But unlike the plans of man God's plans cannot be overthrown.
  - **Though Satan is alive and well in the world and mankind acts upon their evil desires, God is still in control**
  - While Satan is powerful and can manipulate those in the world with his lies, God cannot be overcome.
  - God still needed the apostles to do His work and it was not yet their time to join Him in heaven.
    - God intervened and saved His sheep from the slaughter so they could finish His work.
- **How does man/Satan try to fight and overcome the plans of God?**
- **In what ways has God overcome the evil plans of man/Satan?**
- While it was God's will for the apostles to be freed they still had to be obedient to God.
  - The angel told them to return to the temple and to tell the people all about this life (which is the Gospel).
  - The apostles had a choice
    - The angel told them to return, but they still had to obey that command.
    - God desired for them to return to the temple and resume preaching, but this was of course a request that would have consequences.
      - They knew that returning would put them again in a position of defying the orders of the Jewish leaders and their life would be at stake.
    - **So would they take their freedom and run? Or would they obey God and put their trust in Him?**
    - The apostle's choice was obvious they would trust God and return to do His works.
  - The relationship between the will of God and our obedience.
    - We are not robots or puppets that God forces our choices. While He certainly could if He chose to that is not what He does.
    - God does choose who He will use, He directs our paths, puts us in certain circumstances and gives us His good works to perform.
      - But there is one thing that He leaves up to us.
    - God still gives us the ability to choose in a way that will directly affect ourselves and others.
      - Regardless of the circumstances we always have two options.
      - We can choose to either obey God, or we choose to disobey Him.
        - Everything else God controls, but the choice to obey or disobey is for us to decide.
      - **God doesn't make that choice for us. (Garden of Eden)**
    - While it is God's will and desire for certain things to take place, our role in His plan is determined by our obedience.
      - God may have a plan to bring the Gospel to a certain person or group and so He calls and commands an individual to do it.
        - But that person He calls has a choice of whether or not to obey God.

- God may have a plan for your life that He wants you go to into the ministry.
    - But you have a choice to obey the call of God or to turn away.
  - **What do you think would have happened if the apostles would have had said no to the angel?**
- Those who do the work God has called them will have struggles but they will succeed as long as they obey God.
  - At times to do the work that God has called us to can be very hard and difficult.
  - But if we obey God even in the difficulty and hard times, we will find that His will will ultimately be done.
  - The apostles knew that going back to the temple was to risk going right back to jail, but they trusted God to take care of them.
  - Obeying God was more important to them.
- **How do you see the relationship between the will of God and your obedience in your own life”?**
- The apostles defense to the Jewish leaders and the advice from Gamaliel | Acts 5:25-42
  - **Read Acts 5:25-42**
  - The Jewish leaders found the apostles and brought them back to the council
    - They did this without force however as they were afraid themselves of being stoned by the people since they obviously praised the apostles.
  - They didn't seem to question the apostles about their escape, but instead returned to their disobedience for teaching in the name of Jesus.
    - That was still their priority.
  - The response of Peter and the apostles was the same as in previous cases, they chose to obey God instead of man.
    - They were not going to quit teaching in the name of Jesus because God called them.
  - The Jewish leaders were enraged and wanted to kill the apostles, but Gamaliel intervened.
    - While this response should have earned them death we see that Gamaliel gave some advice to the Jewish leaders regarding these apostles.
      - He apparently was the only one that could put aside the blinding rage of hate against the apostles to think with some common sense.
      - The Jewish leaders were blinded by their hate and could not recognize genuine works of God.
    - He advised that if what these apostles were doing was really just from man then it would go away. But if it was from God then they would be find themselves fighting against Him.
      - He of course was right!
  - The apostles were flogged for their disobedience but were released.
    - Apparently they didn't want them to be let go easily so a public flogging was in order to make them feel better about themselves.
  - The apostles even in their persecution rejoiced because they were worthy to be dishonored on behalf of the name of Jesus Christ.
    - Matthew 5:10-12
      - “those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because

your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- Philippians 1:29
  - “For it has been given to you on Christ’s behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,”