

# The Pure Church has Life

1. Last week we looked at the how Satan attacked the church from within the church...through a lying spirit...of hypocrisy
  - a. We looked at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> miracle that happened in the church...was the killing of Ananias and Sapphira to remove the lying spirit from the church
  - b. The result was a fear of the Lord...not only did the Christians fear the Lord...but now...so did the people outside the church
  - c. God has been answering the prayer of the fellowship...with miracles... signs and wonders...and boldness to preach the gospel
  
2. Acts 5:12-13, 12 The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. 13 But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them.
  - a. The first thing the Holy Spirit wants to point out to us...God answers their prayers...**Pause** ...by continuing to perform miracles signs and wonders
  - b. Not only are signs and wonders happening...but so are regular meetings...notice where...at the temple
  - c. We know what happens when things go down at the temple...trouble is a brewing
  - d. Still...they are meeting...in spite of the trouble that comes with meeting
  - e. This is Solomon's Colonnade is

3. Slide... map...map...map
  - a. This is where they are having church...right in the presence of the religious people...and they are performing miracles
  - b. Slide...map
  - c. The people going to the temple...would see the Christians meeting
  - d. Don't miss the picture here...of what is going on...Because of the boldness...the signs and wonders...that are happening
  - e. The two hypocrites dying...the non-Christians now have a respect for the apostles and the church
  - f. If you heard of a church today...performing signs and wonders...but kills hypocrites... would you want to go...I mean...People die there
  - g. Now before you answer that question...also consider...people are being healed...changed...born again...there are signs and wonders
  - h. When I think of a pure church...with pure motives...that is changing people's lives...where people are being truly born again
  - i. Where people are growing in relationship with Christ...A church that teaches what true life in Christ is... ..I want to be part of that church
  - j. Hypocrisy doesn't belong in that kind of church...because hypocrisy only leads to death...what I am looking for...is life
  - k. They had over 5000 followers...and other wanted this new life also... because they were growing
4. Acts 5:14 Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women.

- a. Something is happening...the church is growing...in spite of the all the religious leaders threats...and the killing of the hypocrites
  - b. People are desiring to be part of the church...that people die at...why... because people down deep...really...really want the truth of God
  - c. There comes a time...in peoples lives...when they get tired of the lies
  - d. There comes a time when people want the truth of God's word...to live the truth...to live the Bible...to live as a Christian should
  - e. I want to be a Christian more than anything else in the world...even if it kills me...even if it hurts me...and it has
  - f. The Holy Spirit is so excited about this church...people are being healed... people are being changed...showing the world...that Christ is for real
5. Acts 5:15-16, 15 As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. 16 Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.
6. Slide...This power was the result of pure faith of the apostle's work
- a. There was nothing mystic about Peter's shadow...but because of what the Holy Spirit was doing...He purged the church of hypocrisy
  - b. So the church would become powerful...to be a life giving church...that people were releasing their faith...and all were healed
  - c. Just like the woman who believed if she could only touch the hem of Jesus's robe...she was releasing faith...and healed

- d. When the disciples lacked faith...Jesus would ask them...where is their faith...well we are seeing it now
- e. The question is...why **don't** we see the power and miracles of the book of Acts...in churches today...it is happening today
- f. In countries where Christianity is illegal...such as Iran...China...and other Muslim countries...missionaries are experiencing these kinds of miracles
- g. They don't have Bibles...or tracts to hand out...
- h. They would be killed if they discovered they even had one...or were found out they were missionaries...but yet they risk their lives...because of Christ
- i. Reports of Jesus is appearing to the Muslims in dreams...are being reported by missionaries
- j. Missionaries are reporting signs and wonders happening...to bring faith
- k. Which is causing many to come to faith in Jesus...all these things are going on where Christianity is illegal
- l. During covid's lock down...the largest recorded amount of Christian material ever downloaded in a country...was in Iran
- m. In America...the majority of internet down loads...where porn
- n. In an article written by Justin Long...
- o. Says that more people have died for their faith in the Twentieth Century than in all of the previous centuries combined
- p. From AD 33 to 1900, they have documented 14 million martyrs...
- q. During the 20th century alone...they have documented in excess of 26 million Christian martyrs...almost double

- r. Right now...in this century...martyrdom has been on the decline for the past decade
  - s. The current rate is 159,000 martyrs per year...which is down from 330,000 per year at the height of the cold war
  - t. Yet...in many closed counties...the counties that kill Christians  
...Christianity is growing at an alarming rate
  - u. While in America...since covid...church attendance is down 50%
  - v. What we are reading in the book of Acts chapter 5...is the church is alive...  
the Holy Spirit is vibrant...the church is pure...
  - w. The church is growing...and becoming popular...in spite of what the religious leaders say or do
  - x. We should pray for our hearts to be pure...because the byproduct of pure faith...is power
  - y. God wants to send the lost people of the world...to a healthy church...one that is pure...and is life giving
  - z. 3 things are going to happen to apostles...or leaders of this kind of church
7. Slide...1<sup>st</sup> The apostles will be imprisoned in verses 17-21.
  8. Slide...2<sup>nd</sup> The apostles will remain obedient to God in verse 22-23
  9. Slide...3<sup>rd</sup> The apostles will rejoice in suffering in verses 34-42.
  10. Acts 5:17 The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.
  11. Slide...map

- a. We need to realize...what 5000 plus Christians in this area...inside the temple area...would be a very large...and very distracting
- b. And don't miss this...the church is having service...in the religious guys area...the temple courtyard...they can't ignore the apostles
- c. This is an answer to first recorded prayer...they prayed for boldness...and for more miracles...so they can preach more Christ
- d. The first church now has way over 5000 people coming to the temple area...in Solomon's porch
- e. There are miracles...signs and wonders...which is causing...people to release so much faith...by even believing Peter's shadow can heal
- f. Imagine how jealous these religious leaders where...the first church is getting so much attention
- g. There is life...light...freedom...new opportunities to be new creations...
- h. The church has unity...and purity...while all the religious leaders had to offer is...tradition and the law...which is bondage
- i. So instead of the religious people also seeking life...they do what they do best...they try to silence the apostles...by arresting them

12. Acts 5:19-20, 19 But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 20 "Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!"

13. Slide...The gospel is referred to as the words of life

- a. There is the key to ministry...give the people the message of life
- b. Religion give death and bondage

- c. People want life...God wants to give them life...life is only found in the gospel of Jesus...then live it...like the first church
- d. The religious guys were trying to stop a work of Christ...instead of getting involved...with the new work God is doing
- e. The religious want traditions...without any change...but at the same time...are rejecting...the true life in Christ
- f. But God wants us to give others a chance at this new life...as a new creation...which He does by sending people to preach the good news of life

14. Acts 5:21 So at daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching. When the high priest and his officials arrived, they convened the high council—the full assembly of the elders of Israel. Then they sent for the apostles to be brought from the jail for trial.

- a. These guys are obedient and bold to the things of God...in contrast to the religious leaders...who are fearful and have disobeyed God

15. Acts 5:22-24, 22 But when the Temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone. So they returned to the council and reported, 23 "The jail was securely locked, with the guards standing outside, but when we opened the gates, no one was there!" 24 When the captain of the Temple guard and the leading priests heard this, they were perplexed, wondering where it would all end.

16. Slide...The 5<sup>th</sup> miracle recorded is the mystical escape from jail

- a. The Holy Spirit...is real and alive...Jesus is real and alive...and can't be stopped

- b. The Holy Spirit sends an angel...to do a jail break...and tells the apostles to return to the temple...and preach Jesus...or preach life
- c. Here comes all the religious guys getting ready to hand down punishment to kill the apostles...their only crime...breaking their religious traditions
- d. For offering life in Christ...for obeying God rather than them
- e. God broke them out of jail...so do they run and hide...no...they continue to do the very same thing...that put them in jail
- f. The fact the apostles were out and teaching...which perplexed the religious...because they were un-afraid...
- g. The text says...the religious were wondering how this is going to end...what the outcome would be...which is a good thing
- h. Notice they didn't wonder how they got out of jail...they didn't wonder if they had the thing of God wrong...they knew they were wrong about Jesus

17. Acts 5:25-26, 25 Then someone arrived with startling news: "The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple, teaching the people!" 26 The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them.

- a. Notice it wasn't the Roman guards...it was the temple guards...and don't miss...they were now afraid...of a riot...so they arrested them nicely

18. Acts 5:27 Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. 28 "Didn't we tell you never again to teach in this man's name?" he demanded. "Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"

- a. The apostles didn't teach the law and tradition...instead...they filled Jerusalem with the teaching of Him...meaning Jesus
- b. Oh boy would I like to hear that spoken about us...that we are filling this area with the teachings of Jesus...fill this area of the truth of the gospel
- c. How do we do this...the same way the apostles did...by getting filled with the Holy Spirit and preach with boldness...the name of Jesus
- d. I want to see this lying spirit at work...in the last part of verse 28...the religious guys are trying to act offended
- e. When the lying spirit gets caught in their lie...they try to act as if you are the bad guy for pointing it out...we see this in the media today
- f. Just a few weeks ago...the religious leaders...actually asked for the responsibility of Jesus's murder...to be placed on them

19. Matt 27:20-25, 20 Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be put to death. 21 So the governor asked again, "Which of these two do you want me to release to you?" The crowd shouted back, "Barabbas!" 22 Pilate responded, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" 23 "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?" But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!" 24 Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!" 25 And all the people yelled back, "We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!"

- a. They were willing to accept the consequences for the death of Jesus then...because it fit their agenda...
- b. And now they are playing the victim...of discrimination...or racist...or how your words are cruel...the spirit doesn't change...only the narrative
- c. What God seems to be doing...is showing a separation...a difference between true Christianity...and spirit of religion
- d. The true church is pure...life giving...Holy Spirit filled...while religion leads to death...blaming...and hypocrisy
- e. But the gates of hell will not stop the church...Here comes the boldness of the Holy Spirit again...speaking truth...we should be this way also

20. Acts 5:29-31, 29 But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross. 31 Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent of their sins and be forgiven.

- a. Catch what Peter said...God is doing these things...why
- b. So the people of Israel would the opportunity to repent...to turn away...or to stop desiring their sin...and be forgiven...**pause**...the gospel
- c. Peter is also quoting Ps 2 and the new covenant of Jerimiah 31

21. Acts 5:32 We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him."

- a. The law requires 2 witness to be truth...here Peter says...we Christians are all witnesses to this work of God...and so is the Holy Spirit a witness

- b. Peter also reveals the trinity...which is not kosher to a Jew
- c. Jews will say God is one...so Jesus can't be God...and the Holy Spirit can't be God...which makes us idolators in their eyes

22. Acts 5:33-39, 33 When they heard this, the high council was furious and decided to kill them. 34 But one member, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, who was an expert in religious law and respected by all the people, stood up and ordered that the men be sent outside the council chamber for a while. 35 Then he said to his colleagues, "Men of Israel, take care what you are planning to do to these men! 36 Some time ago there was that fellow Theudas, who pretended to be someone great. About 400 others joined him, but he was killed, and all his followers went their various ways. The whole movement came to nothing. 37 After him, at the time of the census, there was Judas of Galilee. He got people to follow him, but he was killed, too, and all his followers were scattered. 38 "So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!"

- a. Gamaliel is speaking about 2 other attempts to create other religions or cults...anything other than Judaism
- b. Gamaliel is the grandson of the famous Hillel
- c. Hillel has over 600 interpretations of the law recorded in the Talmud... a Jewish book...that is still read and taught...in synagogues today
- d. Gamaliel is also the rabbi...or teacher of a Pharisees named Saul of Tarsus
- e. We know this Saul of Tarsus...as Paul the apostle

- f. On hand this advice of Gamaliel is wise...still on the other hand it foolish.
- g. It is wise from an eternal stand point...because you can't fight against God
- h. But from a temporal stand point it doesn't work...
- i. Because he is putting Jesus...and the signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit...in the same category...as these other failed attempts of religion
- j. We see this is not true...because we see many churches or false religions today...that have stood the test of time such as the Mormon Church
- k. Even the apostate church...or Jehovah witnesses

23. Acts 5:40-42, 40 The others accepted his advice. They called in the apostles and had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go. 41 The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. 42 And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah."

- a. Please notice the response of the persecution...they rejoice
- b. They rejoice because they were beaten for their faith...to suffer for Christ...and they continued to teach Jesus is Lord