

# Obedience to God

## Grace Bible Chapel

Outline: The Acts of the Apostles – Acts 5:27-32

October 29th, 2017

**Context:** Our narrative of the apostles being jailed then supernaturally released continues with their dialogue and defense before the Sanhedrin. These leaders once again ignore the obvious miraculous work of God and indict the apostles for continuing to teach in Jesus name, and bringing His blood on them – both which were true. Peter's statement "we must obey God rather than men" is one of the most important clarifying statements ever made. Not only did it clarify the problem is with the Sanhedrin being in opposition to God, but that anytime man in whatever position is directly violating God's commands and confronting God's people – they must be opposed! This truth spreads across the timeline of history and is unchangeable in its importance. To a major degree, this is the issue of life's battle for the Christian – that is Christian's must never bow to the pressure of wicked opposition to God.

In response to the two indictments, Peter boldly proclaims the Sanhedrin guilty of the very things they must proclaim. Not only are they witnesses, but more importantly the Holy Spirit is a witness. In other words the Holy Spirit, which has just supernaturally released them from jail and worked the miracles they have seen, is the supreme witness to the truthfulness of Jesus as the Messiah they murdered at the cross. The key topic of this incident is "obedience" which is reiterated in verse 5:32 "the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." The gift of the Holy Spirit empowers faithfulness through obedience and is a mark of true salvation.

### **Broad outline of Acts (underlined is the immediate context).**

- VI. The Power Needed (Acts 2:1-6:7)
  - F. Second Message (Acts 3:1-4:22)
  - G. Sovereign forming (Acts 4:23-6:7)
    - 10. Supreme control (Acts 5:17-26)
    - 11. Superseding obedience (Acts 5:27-32)

#### Key Words

- God (4)
- obey (2)
- you (3)
- must
- witnesses

- Our study is only weeks from the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension.
- Peter & John arrested for preaching, & then supernaturally released to go back to preaching – when the Sanhedrin find out they retrieve them peacefully.
- They are now once again standing before the Sanhedrin – the ruling Jews (70).

### **Introduction:**

- Is obedience to God important? Many in churches today have concluded that obedience to God is not a part of salvation by grace – we need only to accept Him.
  - The latest cultural theologies lean toward God accommodating man, & seeking to make lives more pleasant – mixing the world with the Bible & calling it faith!
  - The attitude revolves around a skewed view of salvation by grace - meaning that saving faith is only an assent to the fact of Christ as the Savior.
- Our narrative from Luke continues – this is the Word of God – which means:
  - Each encounter, each situation of the apostles is a lesson in true Christianity, & a guide as to the nature of Christianity – what it means & what to expect.
  - As the inspired history of the apostles it is revelation doctrinally, instructionally, & by example. The attitude & action of the apostles should be our goal!
- Who is really on trial? We will see it is actually the Sanhedrin, but I would also say in a spiritual sense so are Peter & the apostles – they are being tested by God for their faithfulness under pressure – & that kind of testing continues today with us!

Point: We must constantly learn to look beyond the immediate circumstances of life to the sovereign God who is purposely behind every situation.

Point: The unsaved are on trial every time they are confronted with the truth of God, & if in Christ – you & I we are being used before them, & tested each time we are pressured to give a defense before others. I believe this is our lesson today!

11. **Superseding obedience** (Vs. 5:27-26)

- **Sanhedrin threats** (Vs. 5: 27-28)
- **Vs. 27** – “when they had brought them” - the stage has been set – there is a lot of baggage behind this circumstance (preaching/jailed/released/preaching). Once again Jesus followers will be tested, & once again the Sanhedrin will be on trial.
  - This would be the whole council – 70 members (Pharisees & Sadducees).
  - “The high priest questioned them” – conspicuously absent was any mention of their supernatural escape – the high priest was not interested in addressing the miracle – it was simply ignored as other miraculous events had been ignored!
  - Their minds were made up – they did not want the facts, only their agenda.

**Point:** This is the kind of response to God’s truth to be most often expected – (John 3:19 “men love darkness...deeds were evil.”)

- **Vs. 28** – We have the charges made against them! “We gave strict orders...filled Jerusalem with your teaching.” That is the first indictment – that is they had disobeyed the Sanhedrin – this was a true indictment – they had disobeyed!
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> indictment: “intend...bring blood on us” – this is also true & boldly proclaimed (2:23; 36; 3:15; 4:10-11).
    - When proclaiming truth toes get stepped on!
    - But, the rulers more importantly indicted themselves to God (Mat. 27:25).

**Point:** So do all who reject the truth of Christ, (John 3:18) “have been judged already.”

- **Significant choice** (Vs. 5:29) – Under real pressure – they must make a choice!
- **Vs. 29** – Peter & the apostles answer boldly – they do not deny either charge, but instead make the most profound statement “we must obey God rather than men.”
  - Three major changes at new birth in Christ (Christianity 101- but largely disregarded today) – not merely being religious, but real change:
    - Love–(Mat. 22:37 command; 1 Cor. 13:2 “nothing;”16:22 “if anyone..cursed”).
    - Faith – (Heb. 11:6 “without,” Eph. 2:8 channel, “by faith;” John 3:16 “believes.”
    - Obedience – “we must obey God” – this is one of the most eye opening simple summary statements in all of Scripture.
- Park here for a moment – this is an essential to understand in the definition of a Christian – the new birth creates a perfect interconnected triangle of these characteristics – the points are love, faith, & obedience.
  - These three key marks are indicators of the reality of salvation. This is precisely what the Word declares – 1 John – written to define who is saved elaborates on all three (a most important epistle) my book “presumed faith:”
    - Love for God as my new Master, My Lord – the One who is the central Person of my new life – as Paul says “my all in all.”
    - Faith promotes this love, & drives me in thinking & daily decisions.
    - Obedience is the natural offspring of both love & faith. All three are interconnected, essential, & active in the true child of God.
  - This paragraph’s theme is obedience – seen again in Vs. 32 “those who obey Him” where it is given as an essential in salvation.
    - The importance of obedience is throughout the Word. It began in the garden of Eden. It is not something we can merely fain (Ps. 81:15) pretend.
    - Samuel rebuked Saul for his disobedience & Saul tried to cover it by being religious (1 Sam. 15:22).
    - How do we know His will? – the Word & our in-tune conscience.
    - This word “obey” is unique – it is used only 4 times & always in certain contexts.

- Obey – pe thark eho – two roots – pitho – means to convince & have confidence, & arko – means to reign over – so the first Greek root has active hearing leading to a reigning over change of submission to God’s will.
  - There are two primary words translated obey, or obedience in the NT.
  - Both have similar meanings related to submission – Eph 6:1 “children obey” is the other word for obey, hupakouo – both have similar meanings but our word for obey in this context is used in conjunction to rulers or kings.

**Point:** Peter is saying God now rules my life. If any other person no matter how great or humanly important tells me to do something contrary to God (my One supreme ruler), I cannot obey that voice – I can only obey God.

- John 3:36 – A person cannot truly hear to a point of belief without also acting on that belief by obedience. Believing & obeying are inseparable – the very reaction of evidence for believing is obedience. 1 Jhn. 2:3-4 – obedient to God.
- This is the same interconnectivity of Christ’s Words – Mat. 10:38 - to carry the cross” is a graphic figurative expression – to be willing to endure whatever is trying, or disgraceful, in following Christ – it is our test of obedience. “worthy” axeos – means not suitable – without obedience we are unsuited for Christ.
- We obey God & leave the consequences of our obedience to Him.
- How do we know God’s will? This Word & our conscience. God has outfitted us.

**Point:** Never think, as with so much of superficial modern Christianity, that having Jesus as my Savior is merely accepting Him factually – no it is a complete giving of self to Him, I am dethroned & He is enthroned.

- “rather than men” – a choice had to be made by these apostles. It was a very high priced choice. They could lose their lives as with Christ only days before.
- Now, regardless of the “rather than....blank” (most often self) it matters not what goes there – the only choice is to always obey God.

**Point:** Our standard is Jesus who obeyed the Father even to the cross (Phil. 2:8).

**Point:** Only the HS of God working in us can give us the power we need to stand in obedience to God against all the forces of men, Satan, or our own flesh.

- **Shameless defense** (Vs. 5:30-31)
- **Vs. 30** – the apostles were not intimidated – their boldness is as supernatural as the opening of the jail. Men in general always cow-tow to other men according to the fear of men & the situation – such is the PC of our society!
  - These Sanhedrin had been privy either by witnesses or first hand knowledge of the healings, the jail releases, & most importantly the very resurrection of Christ, & now they witness the supernatural boldness of these fishermen.
  - Those really on trial are them – “raised up Jesus whom you put to death.”
    - The phrase “put to death” means by your own hands. Peter rather than caving increases the pressure on them saying they are as guilty as if they had personally nailed the nails into His body.
    - It was not only a murder, but death on the cross – the very worst & most shameful, demeaning, & torturous of deaths.
- **Vs. 31** – But, just as God thwarted their attempt to imprison the apostles by supernaturally releasing them – even more so Peter says: “raised up Jesus” (Vs. 30) & “exalted to the right hand as a Prince and a Savior.”
  - Prince – refers to one who is kin to the king, & uses His authority as a pioneer – Heb. 2:10; 12:2 – there is no One like Him in what He did regard to humility, death for sinners, & yet exaltation to the right hand of God the Father.
  - Savior – the One promised from the beginning (Gen. 3:15) – Shiloh (Gen. 49:10), the Messiah – this is the One you murdered – ie: this glorious Person.

- But Peter doesn't stop there – “to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” – why does Peter add this?
  - The fact he uses Israel is because these men were charged with Israel's spiritual oversight – yet they are the very ones fighting against God.
  - Notice – “repentance” is an essential element in a saving faith relationship – just as forgiveness of sins is promised to those who will come to God.

**Point:** This is yet another gospel presentation even to these hardened religious leaders who have rejected the truth repeatedly, & committed the worst sin imaginable. This is the extension of repentance & forgiveness – our God is gracious!

**Point:** we will see when we get to verse 33 this offer – this message does not penetrate their hearts “intended to kill them.”

**Point:** These are fighting directly with God – so are all unsaved people, & yet God has graciously moved in salvation & makes such a glorious, kind, generous offer.

- They are not filled with guilt, remorse, conviction – but instead hatred!

● **Supernatural explanation** (Vs. 5:32)

● **Vs. 32** – “We are witnesses” – Peter summarizes why they have been able to heal, why they have been supernaturally let out of jail, why they stand boldly before these men who otherwise hold their well-being in their hands.

**Point:** It is another way of saying we know personally what I am telling you is true! We should never cower when we have God's truth – “if God be...against” (Rm. 8:31).

- “Holy Spirit” – These men had not merely rejected the claims of fishermen, but had rejected God's clear & powerful testimony of Christ by signs, miracles, & the resurrection – showing their stubborn blindness to truth & hatred of God.

● Peter makes it clear – we have moved into a new era – God gives the HS to those who obey Him. The word is our same word as in Vs. 29 – of submission to God – His rule over me – this is the requirement of true salvation by faith!

- This is true HS driven salvation by faith living.

**Closing:** These thought they ended the Jesus movement, but it is powerfully moving.

- These Sanhedrin are jealous & angry – sending amazing pressure. Yet, God's power supersedes – the power of truth, God's truth.
- I hope you see this is our picture too – who will rule our lives? Self, circumstances, others who pressure us, or will you submit to God – humbly, repentantly, by faith.
- Obey is the essence of this paragraph – it means actual, absolute, unquestioning submission to God. Seen in following His Word, which is faith in His Son.
- It is in the power of obedience that Peter & the apostles stood.
  - The idea of getting along, compromising with the world is everywhere today.
  - It is the PC atmosphere – do not rock the boat!
  - Peter stated “we must obey God” – or as history records Martin Luther “I cannot recant, here in I stand, I can do no other, God help me!” What are we doing?
  - I pray by God's grace we are living out our faith in our own little world, not playing games, but simply obeying Him as our Lord & Master.